

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

1947

Study of John Galsworthy's social criticism

Ivan Edward Ahlgren

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Ahlgren, Ivan Edward, "Study of John Galsworthy's social criticism" (1947). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 3717.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/3717>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

A STUDY OF JOHN GALSWORTHY'S SOCIAL CRITICISMS

by

Ivan E. Ahlgren

Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

Montana State University

1947

Approved:

Edmund Freeman
Chairman of the Examining Committee

W. P. Clark
Dean of the Graduate School

UMI Number: EP34670

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent on the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP34670

Copyright 2012 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This edition of the work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. THE PRE-WAR PERIOD (1900-1914).	6
Divorce and Women's Rights.	9
Poverty	16
Justice	25
Prisons	29
The Church.	36
Morality.	39
War	42
Parliament.	46
III. THE WAR YEARS (1914-1918)	48
The War	50
The Land Problem.	56
IV. THE POST-WAR PERIOD (1919-1933)	73
Divorce and Women's Rights.	76
Poverty	80
Justice	86
Prisons	89
The Land Problem.	91
Education and The Press	98
Big Business.	101
V. CONCLUSION.	103

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

John Galsworthy (1867-1932), novelist, playwright, and essayist, came from a moderately wealthy English family. After an education at Oxford (1886-90), where he studied law, he was called to the bar in 1890. While he read law at Lincoln's Inn, London, he indulged in his habit, according to a friend, of " . . . wandering about at night in the poorer districts, listening to the conversations of people, sometimes visiting doss-houses."¹ From this habit, perhaps, came much of the material for the books in which he described the London slums. Although Galsworthy was trained in the law he did not choose to practice it, preferring to spend the bulk of his time between 1891-93 in travels abroad, during which, as biographers inevitably remark, he "met Joseph Conrad." Returning to London, he read more law until in 1895, when, at the age of twenty-eight, he decided, despite the opposition of his parents, to become a writer.

Galsworthy's first book, From the Four Winds, was a collection of short stories that appeared in 1897 under the

¹ G. M. Moss, as quoted by Vincent Marrot, The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 65. Hereafter cited as Marrot, Life and Letters.

pseudonym John Sinjohn.² The stories were "innocently sensational . . . sentimental, neat and slight . . ." tales of adventure and travel, which bore little resemblance to those he was to write a few years later.³ In 1898 appeared Jocelyn, a love story which The Saturday Review called "a comedy of manners and a melodrama worked out with some psychological insight," but whose last part "meanders through a maze of tiresome psychological subtleties to a happy conclusion."⁴ In Villa Rubein, a novel written in 1900, Galsworthy showed flashes of the sort of work he was to accomplish later; the latent social critic in him began to stir and come to life. Alois Harz, the novel's hero, criticizes Society's meanness⁵ and its lack of courage,⁶ and Nicholas Treffrey expresses indignation at the ungentlemanly way in which an acquaintance has treated his wife.⁷ In the main, however, Villa Rubein, like its predecessors, concerned itself chiefly with plot.

² Jocelyn and Villa Rubein also appeared under the pseudonym.

³ Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 109.

⁴ As quoted in Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 115.

⁵ John Galsworthy, Villa Rubein and Other Stories (vol. IV, The Novels, Tales, and Plays of John Galsworthy, Devon Edition, 12 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 23.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 63-65.

It was not, however, until he wrote The Island Pharisees (1904), that Galsworthy accomplished his first real criticisms of Society, and it was with that novel that this study began. In The Island Pharisees, Galsworthy succeeded in focussing rather more sharply his criticisms of the Society he saw about him, though he was forced to rewrite even this book twice. Succeeding with a third version, Galsworthy ended a "period of ferment and transition" which had begun about 1901 and which had resulted in an "awakening to the home truths of social existence and national character."⁸ Though, as Galsworthy remarked, the book was less good than its successors because "the liquor bubbled too furiously for clear bottling," it did serve very well as an introduction to his later novels in which were delineated "somewhat satirically," those sections of "Society" (the middle and upper classes) which Galsworthy chose to spell "with a more or less capital 'S'."⁹

In his studies of Society, Galsworthy had many occasions to write of the various social ailments and problems of his day; of social, legal, moral, religious, political, and economic customs and conditions which were

⁸ Galsworthy, Villa Rubein and Other Stories, p. x.

⁹ Loc. cit.

imperfect, which caused pain and suffering to people, and which needed rectifying. It is the purpose of this paper to isolate and examine Galsworthy's criticisms of these matters, to set them out in such order and in as much detail as seems advisable, and to draw such conclusions as are indicated by the examination. The paper will deal with the problems rather than with the classes of Society (except where the two are inseparable), and though it may at times touch on critical evaluation, that will be incidental to the examination itself.

A word as to the method of procedure is in order. Since the number of Galsworthy's novels, plays, and essays is great (twenty novels, seventeen volumes of short stories and essays, and twenty-six plays), and since the following of any theme through all of them would lead to confusion, they have been separated into three groups. The grouping is chronological, with those works written between 1904 and July, 1914/ (the eve of World War I) making up the first group; the works written between August, 1914 (the beginning of the war) and 1918 (with a few works, obviously written under the influence of the war, being included from 1919) the second; and the other works of 1919, together with those written between 1920 and 1932, the third. With the great mass of Galsworthy's work thus broken up, the studying of it becomes easier, and the exposition clearer and less complex.

A general historical and social background has been placed at the beginning of each period, in the hope that Galsworthy's criticisms will stand out the more clearly if some sort of objective measuring stick is provided by which to gauge them. The background, however, is included primarily for the convenience of the reader, since this thesis is not intended as a treatment of the historical validity of Galsworthy's social criticisms.

CHAPTER II

THE PRE-WAR PERIOD (1900-1914)

The time between 1900 and 1914 was one of transition from the safe, prosperous Victorian age to the chaos of the first World War. The English in 1904 were still thinking of Victoria's reign, a time which had offered unequalled opportunities for the amassing of great wealth, and for the preservation of wealth through wise investment. They retained yet the philosophy of that time--they believed in the government, the church, and in the maintaining of the established order of things. True, they had been shaken by the army's notable lack of success in winning the Boer War; yet after it was done, and in the excitement following the Queen's death and the accession of King Edward VII, they soon forgot that unhappy imperialistic venture. England was still sound, they believed, and would continue to flourish as she had in Victorian times.

Yet there were already signs that the Victorian age was done and that a new era was coming. Labor was growing restless, and toward the end of the period, belligerent. Women, more and more loudly, were demanding equal rights with men, and especially the right to vote. Such matters as the divorce laws and the treatment of prisoners were being questioned. The problem of providing adequate

housing, better pay, unemployment compensation and security in old age for the vast working classes were demanding attention from the harrassed government, and from the wealthy society which it represented.¹ Too, there was the land-problem--the gradual extinction of England's agriculture through the custom of importing cheaper farm produce from abroad, the ownership of the land by a relatively small number of landlords, and the disappearance of the sturdy farm laborer from the land.²

Other forces were breaking down the pattern of Victorian life. Imperceptibly, the newspapers, the bicycles, and the movies were changing not only the social habits of Victorian England, but its habits of thought as well. The cheap press, distributing its newspapers ever more widely, was gaining power and skill in the moulding of mass thought. Cheap and rapid means of transportation (bicycles, autos, and faster trains) were giving mobility to the masses. Movies, although still in their infancy, were becoming more and more the instruments of mass amusement, and of mass escape.

¹ George Macauley Trevelyan, History of England (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), pp. 894-95.

² Between 1881 and 1911, ^{the} urban population increased 10.2%, while rural population decreased 10.2%. Percy Alden, M. P., Democratic England (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), p. 238.

If all was not quiet at home, neither was it quiet abroad. England, France, and Germany were engaged in a struggle for African colonies, and were watching each other closely. When the Russian-German alliance forced France and England to join forces, and when the ever more belligerent Germany engaged with England in a naval armament race, the outcome, war, was nearly certain. Thus the period was one whose latter half, at least, was a slow but inevitable approach to war, and an equally inevitable, though at the time generally unsuspected, death to Victorian tranquillity.

When Galsworthy in 1901 began to write The Island Pharisees, the calm surface of Victorianism yet persisted, but underneath it turbulent forces were at work. Life appeared to go on much as before, but it was subtly changing; after the publication of The Island Pharisees in 1904 only a decade was left the English in which to enjoy the legacy of comfort and security remaining from the Nineteenth Century. In this climate of deceptive tranquillity, Galsworthy accomplished the first and perhaps most important part of his work, and in this time he built his reputation as a writer. He attained, too, a reputation as a social critic for his fictionization of such social problems as women's rights, inequality of justice, the prison system, and war. Criticism of the Victorian attitude toward women was one of his chief themes, and as such it has been placed first in this chapter.

I. DIVORCE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Galsworthy, in The Island Pharisees and succeeding books, was concerned about the Victorian man's feeling that his wife was property, to be treated however he desired. He was concerned too, with the fact that this proprietary view resulted in the virtual denial of divorce to a woman who found that she did not or could not love her husband, and who thus desired to be freed from a union which could cause her great unhappiness, and in effect, spoil her life. Galsworthy, who could not bear to see even birds kept in cages, thought the caging of women abhorrent, and raised his voice against it.

The particular target of his ire was the complacent insensitive husband who can understand neither that his wife suffers from having to live with him, nor that the humane behavior is for him to free her. Halidome of The Island Pharisees, Galsworthy's first example of the complacent husband, illustrates the type as well as any who appear later. He meets the suggestion that his wife could dislike him with disbelief, and the thought of divorce he dismisses summarily. A better solution, he thinks, is to "take her travelling; shake her mind up."³

³ John Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees (revised edition; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 49.

Soames Forsyte (The Man of Property,⁴ 1906) was another such husband. Unable to understand Irene's dislike of him, he resolves to get her out of London, away from people who "put ideas into her head."⁵ George Dedmond (The Fugitive,⁶ 1913) was a third.

In Galsworthy's view, Society and its staunch supporter, the Church, were in league with the husband to prevent the possibility of divorce. From The Island Pharisees, where Society applauds heartily a play in which a rebellious woman is advised that the "only way of salvation [is] to kiss her husband"⁷ to A Bit O' Love, where a young curate is condemned as "unchristian" because he dares to show mercy to his wife, Society was shown by Galsworthy to be solidly against divorce.⁸

⁴ John Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga (with a preface by Ada Galsworthy; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 3-309. The Forsyte Saga also contains In Chancery, pp. 363-639; and To Let, pp. 665-921.

⁵ Galsworthy, The Man of Property, p. 52.

⁶ John Galsworthy, Plays: Third Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), pp. 1-93.

⁷ Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees, p. 45.

⁸ This attitude is strongly evident in The Man of Property, The Country House, A Commentary ("Justice"), Fraternity, and The Patrician.

He considered the Anglican Church to be, even more than the Victorian husband or Society, an implacable enemy of divorce. Galsworthy showed the strength of the Church's opposition when he had the Reverend Hussell Barter (The Country House, 1907) deliberately try to block Helen Bellow's divorce from her besotted husband. To allow her a divorce, even if she found her husband unbearable, would, he says, be "sentimental" and "immoral."⁹ Reverend Noel (The Patrician, 1911), is so strongly opposed to divorce that he prefers to condemn his beautiful estranged wife to what the liberal, Courtier, calls the "living death"¹⁰ of separation rather than to divorce her and allow her to remarry.

Through Paramor, a lawyer of The Country House, Galsworthy described yet another obstacle to divorce. The English divorce laws, which, according to Paramor, were still influenced by the "old ecclesiastical concept of marriage,"¹¹ were so framed as to put almost insurmountable legal barriers in the path of the person desiring divorce. The first of

⁹ John Galsworthy, The Country House (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), p. 179.

¹⁰ John Galsworthy, Worshipful Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 491-743. Worshipful Society also contains The Country House, pp. 3-219; and Fraternity, pp. 226-468.

¹¹ Galsworthy, The Country House, p. 90.

these was the ruling that adultery was the only ground for a divorce. The commission of adultery by one of the partners in a marriage had to be proven to the satisfaction of not only the court, but also of the King's proctor, who was appointed to prevent collusion between husband and wife. But if a woman were suing for divorce, she had to prove that in addition to committing adultery, her husband had treated her cruelly. "This," said Paramor, "is the law." Recourse to the divorce court had the added disadvantage of publication of court proceedings in newspapers which delighted to print whatever bits of scandal appeared during a trial. Since, by their very nature, the trials caused evidence of an extremely personal kind to be made public, people came to consider a divorce as the last possible remedy for an unhappy marriage, because they had no desire to have their private lives made notorious in the public press. Many of Galsworthy's characters were shown as fearing the effect of scandal born of newspaper notoriety, including Soames Forsyte (The Man of Property, 1906), Squire Pendyce (The Country House, 1907), Hilary Dallison (Fraternity, 1909), and George Dedmond (The Fugitive, 1913).

While Galsworthy had the greatest sympathy for the oppressed wives of sedate Victorian husbands, he was less in accord with the so-called "new woman," who was beginning to make her way into the professions. Hitherto, he said, it

had been unusual for a woman to work, except as Francis Forsythe did, in the composing of little songs and poems for the "Ladies' Genteel Guide"; now, however, the taboo was beginning to die out. In The Man of Property appeared his first example of the new woman, a Mrs. MacAnder, whose briskness and unfemininity seemed to Galsworthy "distressing." He noted ironically that no one had done more than the women of Mrs. MacAnder's sort to destroy whatever "sense of chivalry" remained in men.¹² If one may judge by the frequency with which they appear in his works, Galsworthy liked better such gentle and feminine women as Irene Forsythe (The Man of Property) and Margery Pendyce (The Country House).

With the women's suffrage movement, which had been slowly gaining ground since the mid-Nineteenth Century, Galsworthy was in agreement. Although the question did not get into his novels or plays, he stated his opinion so clearly in The Nation¹³ in 1910 that no mistake can be made about his position. Since women were physically weaker than men, he said, they perforce occupied an inferior

¹² Galsworthy, The Man of Property, p. 234.

¹³ John Galsworthy, "Gentles, Let Us Rest" (A Paper in The Nation, 1910), A Sheaf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 164-65.

political and social position. Lest anyone doubt that their position was inferior, it would be necessary only to state two facts which were generally admitted to be true:

Women have not the political vote. Women, who can be divorced for one kind of offense [adultery], must before they obtain divorce, prove two kinds of offense against their husbands [adultery and cruelty].¹⁴

Since, however, humanity was always striving (even if unconsciously) after equity and justice, Galsworthy believed that the women's suffrage movement would eventually triumph, especially since it showed ever-increasing strength from its inception in 1866. Parliament's refusal, on grounds of political expediency, to grant suffrage was the only obstacle to the "fruition" of the women's suffrage movement.¹⁵ Ironically enough, in Galsworthy's opinion, militant suffragism, then in the beginning of its most destructive stage, was actually harming the cause of the suffragists. The militant suffragists, by their extravagant tactics, had succeeded only in adding "one more element of fixity to an impasse already existing,"¹⁶ since each of their outrages made the government less willing to grant them the vote. Nothing, therefore, was being gained by their tactics, or

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 176.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 178.

by those of the government which opposed them, except the increase of bitterness between the sexes. And at a time when "spirituality" had "ever a more desperate struggle" to maintain itself against materialism, any loss of "aspiration and mutual trust" between the sexes would be a "serious thing."¹⁷ Therefore, he thought, the only course left open to men was to allow a "victory of justice over force"¹⁸ and give women the vote.

It is evident, then, that all through the first years of his writing Galsworthy resented the inferior position in which women perforce were kept by their husbands, by Society, by law, and by the Church. He was, however, in revolt against more than the unfairness of the divorce and suffrage laws: he disliked the whole of the Victorian attitude toward women. He disliked their being assigned to an inferior position to that of men, and he disliked the way in which their attempts to attain freedom were being frustrated by the men. Yet strangely enough, he objected to the very sort of woman who could do the most to assure more freedom to her sex--the self-assured, capable, unyielding "new" woman. Although he wanted the Victorian woman to be

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 183.

placed in a new environment, he wished her to remain unchanged, forgetting perhaps, that more freedom was the very thing which would make the woman more and more "new."

II. POVERTY

Between 1900 and 1914, though the plight of the poorer classes was serious, some efforts were being made to improve it, and if those efforts were perhaps not as effective and as thorough as they might have been, they represented a positive, almost revolutionary advance from conditions in the earlier part of the Victorian period.¹⁹

John Galsworthy, however, was so little satisfied with the progress that was being made in ameliorating the lot of the poor that nearly all of his first-period works were concerned in some degree with that matter. The Island Pharisees (1904) concerned itself chiefly with the problem of the "outcast" class, which was concreted in the persons

¹⁹ Among legislative acts passed for the protection and welfare of the poorer classes were: the Housing for the Working Classes Act, 1890; the Housing and Town-Planning Act, 1909; the Workman's Compensation Act, 1897; the Free Education Bill, 1891; the Voluntary Schools Act, and Elementary Education Act, 1896-97; the Child Labor Regulation Act, 1903 and 1911; the Old Age Pension Act, 1908; and the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1911-13. Donald E. Smith, editor, The New Larned History for Ready Reference Reading and Research (Based on the work of the late J. N. Larned, A.M., 12 vols.; Springfield, Massachusetts: C. A. Nichols Publishing Company, 1924), IV, pp. 2834-58.

of Ferrand, Carolan, the Irishman, and Joshua Creed. Through the relations of Shelton (a wealthy young Pharisee) with these people, Galsworthy was able to criticize the treatment of the poor by Society. Ferrand was of the greatest use; this highly skeptical young Frenchman produces a constant stream of criticism of Society. He dislikes its meanness, its fear of the poor and its consequent suspicion and distrust of them.²⁰ He criticizes workhouses as places that, no matter how admirably they are operated, rob men of their self-respect.²¹ Shelton, through whose eyes we see the story, observes during visits to slums and doss-houses the terrible poverty and degradation in which the "outcast" class is forced to live.²² He criticizes the failure of the benevolent societies to give any real aid to the poor, and Society's habit of blaming the poor for being so, rather than of making an effort to help them.²³

The Silver Box²⁴ (1906) indicates the destructive effect of unemployment on a man of the working class.

²⁰ Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees, pp. 10-11.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 131-32.

²² Ibid., Ch's. III, VII, XIV, and XV.

²³ Ibid., pp. 121-29, and p. 131.

²⁴ John Galsworthy, Plays: First Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, pp. 1-80.

Largely because of resentment at his failure to get work, Jones commits his theft of the silver box. In addition he becomes cruel to his wife, and takes to drink, because as his wife explains, " . . . he's been out of work two months, and it preys upon his mind."²⁵ The play Strife²⁶ (1907), puts the blame for the extreme poverty of the workers for a large industrial firm squarely on the shoulders of the chairman and the board of directors of the company. These gentry, who "thought that not to pay more wages than . . . necessary was the A B C of Commerce,"²⁷ refuse the workers' request for better wages. After six months of refusal to settle the strike, during which the workers and their families suffer greatly from cold and hunger, the board of directors becomes fearful of the trouble the stockholders will cause them if the strike interferes with further dividends, and grant slight wage increases. The implications Galsworthy made here were that a little generosity on the part of the company and its stockholders, would have saved a great deal of unnecessary suffering, but that any such feeling was deliberately put aside in the interests of high profits.

²⁵ Galsworthy, The Silver Box, p. 9.

²⁶ Galsworthy, Plays: First Series, pp. 169-263.

²⁷ Galsworthy, Strife, p. 182.

A Commentary, (1908), which Joseph Conrad called "an appalling indictment of the middle class,"²⁸ draws, in "Old Age," a picture of the terrible poverty of an aged couple, and notes their stiff-necked determination to stay out of the poorhouse, so long as it is possible to work. The old man of "A Commentary" again notes the chief objection of the poor to the workhouse: " . . . you've got to live by rule."²⁹ "A Lost Dog" shows a middle-class man defending himself against his conscience with all the old arguments: poverty is the fault of the poor; benevolent societies and workhouses relieve Society of any personal responsibility for care of the poor; and too much charity or charity too easily obtained will "pauperise" the poor and deprive them of their will to work. It was in Fraternity (1909), however, that Galsworthy made his closest and most detailed study of poverty. Nowhere in his works did Galsworthy draw a blacker picture of the slums and of the people who lived in them. He described street-by-street and alley-by-alley the worst sections of London, and the poor, half-starving, brutalized

²⁸ In his letter to Galsworthy, (whose good friend he was), after reading the book. Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 223.

²⁹ John Galsworthy, A Commentary (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [1908]), p. 10.

creatures who inhabited them. He cleverly heightened the effect by showing the scene through the eyes of the girl Thyme, who, raised in comparative luxury, was doubly shocked by the filth and degradation.

In Fraternity, also, Galsworthy once more showed the futility of the various means by which "socially conscious" Society strove to help the poor. Stephen Dallison sends checks to benevolent societies with comic names; Hilary makes personal contributions to the poor, but is prevented from doing more by his indecisiveness; Thyme sets out to be a social worker, but recoils from the harshness of the life she must lead; and Martin Stone tries through "Sanitism" to make the poor healthy, since he can do nothing to change their basic way of living. Old Mr. Stone, the philosopher, knows why their methods fail: they lack a feeling of common humanity with the poor, they cannot escape class feeling, and they revolt (with the exception of Martin) from actual contact with the poor.³⁰ Socially conscious Society is sincere in its aims, but it lacks the strength to put them into effect; it cannot feel itself to be one with the poor.

Galsworthy took up the problem of the "sweated worker," the persons who worked for inadequate wages in "The

³⁰ Galsworthy, Fraternity, pp. 305-06.

Workers,"³¹ written the same year as Fraternity. Here he gave a graphic description of the poverty in which a pair of garment workers live. They eke out an existence by doing piece work for very little money, and have the hopeless knowledge that their wages will remain poor " . . . as long as there's thousands like us, glad to work for what we can get."³² Here Galsworthy was charging the operators of the industry with deliberately taking advantage of the fact that large numbers of people were unemployed to hold down wages.³³

A play, The Pigeon³⁴ (1912) reinforces the theme of Fraternity: that the only way to deal with the poor is to identify oneself with them, and to have a "feeling heart." This play deals again with "outcasts," the chief of whom is the Ferrand of The Island Pharisees. In addition to this incorrigible vagabond, the characters include a hopeless alcoholic and a young woman who is on the road to becoming a prostitute. Wellwyn, who is much like the Shelton of The Island Pharisees, treats these outcasts humanely: he gives

³¹ John Galsworthy, A Motley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 123-30.

³² Ibid., p. 130.

³³ Alden comes to the same conclusion, terming the practice "parasitic." Percy Alden, "The Problem of Sweating," Democratic England, p. 71.

³⁴ Galsworthy, Plays; Third Series, pp. 1-80.

them food, shelter, money, and sympathy. In contrast with this treatment of them, the efforts of a judge, a cleric, and a sociologist to help the outcasts result in abysmal failure because, while the would-be helpers have enthusiasm, they lack real sympathy with those whom they would reform. When their efforts fail and each of the outcasts relapses into his former ways, the three reformers conclude reluctantly that the only cure for "some of those poor devils" is "the lethal chamber,"³⁵ and leave Wellwyn, the man with the "feeling heart," to continue to care for the outcasts. Though Galsworthy labels the play "Fantasy," its conclusion as to the only way to treat the poor is so like that of Fraternity that little doubt remains as to whether or not he believed in it.

In the same year (1912) Galsworthy suggested a reason why the love of humanity was uncommon in the upper classes.³⁶ Young men of the upper classes, "from whom the ranks of Capital are, in the main, recruited"³⁷ were trained to preserve a rigid caste feeling both at home and at the

³⁵ Galsworthy, The Pigeon, p. 62.

³⁶ Galsworthy, "On Social Unrest (A Paper in The Mail, 1912)," A Sheaf, pp. 188-204.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 191.

public or private schools to which they were sent. Education as practiced in England was to Galsworthy an "automatic 'caste' moulding of the young,"³⁸ and the public school a "great 'caste' factory," where caste feeling became "as set and hard as iron."³⁹ As a result of such an education, the future business, professional, and governmental men of England were brought up in ignorance of the problems of the laboring class, and, in fact, almost in ignorance of the existence of that class. They were taught to see no more than their own side of any question, and of course could have no sympathy for labor when they grew up and had to deal with it.

But if education was a cause of caste feeling, it could, also in Galsworthy's view, be its destroyer. First, however, education must be changed from its disorganized, haphazard state, in which each school proceeded largely in its own direction, with no concerted drive toward an ideal of perfection. A common aim in education was needed. Too, the spiritual side of education had been left to the church, which had lost its former grip on both "classes and masses,"⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., p. 193.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 192.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

and now lacked the "force" to effect in the people a change to "mutual good-will and sense of service."⁴¹ This being true, education was the only force remaining to do the job the church had failed in. But before education could be effective, it must first be put in charge of the "finest spirits and broadest minds" of England. People of such caliber could be relied upon to hold and apply a "really high ideal,"⁴² and to select and train men who would carry on that ideal. Galsworthy called for the establishment of a training college which would turn out educational leaders "imbued with the new spirit, [and] trained in the new standards."⁴³ These men would be put at the heads of England's schools and colleges, as positions in them fell vacant. By so doing, Galsworthy said, machinery would be provided to direct the "latent good-will" which was "implicit" in the nation but which was not being used in "the nation's service."⁴⁴ Once the upper classes were trained to look with more understanding at the lower classes, (were, in fact, given what in Fraternity he called "social

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 199.

⁴² Ibid., p. 201.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

conscience") a good start would have been made toward the reconciliation of the poor with the upper classes. Though the remedy would not prove "immediate," it was necessary since "Democracy will never really flourish till it has taken charge, and that right heartily, of its own spirituality."⁴⁵

III. JUSTICE

Galsworthy was openly critical of the treatment of criminals in English courts and prisons. Nearly half of the plays, novels, and articles of his first period deal either wholly or partially with justice and with the treatment of prisoners.⁴⁶ In particular, he contended that the courts favored the wealthy over the poor and that they often dealt out justice blindly.

Since the first criticism, partiality, appeared in The Silver Box (a play of 1906) and in two essays from The Commentary (1908), it is evident that he was aware of the faults of English justice from the early days of his career.

⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

⁴⁶ Noteworthy are the plays The Silver Box and Justice, the collection of short stories entitled A Commentary and such magazine and newspaper articles as "Solitary Confinement," "The Spirit of Punishment," and "An Unpublished Preface."

The theme of The Silver Box is the difference between the justice administered to the rich and that administered to the poor. Jack Barthwick, the son of a wealthy member of Parliament, comes home drunk one night, bringing with him an "out-of-work" whom he has found on the door step. A discussion between them reveals that the son, in a fit of drunken levity, has stolen his lady companion's purse, and with it, her money. When Barthwick goes to sleep, Jones, in a mood of bitter revolt against the difference in circumstance between himself and the Barthwicks, steals the purse, and with it a silver cigarette box.

After an investigation, Jones is arrested and brought to trial. During the trial, the court directs its attention only to the silver box, and carefully avoids uncovering evidence which will show that the purse, too, has been stolen. Since such evidence would incriminate Barthwick, it is omitted, and Jones is tried for the theft of the box only, despite his efforts to introduce the matter of the purse into the trial. Jones' deed earns him a prison sentence, while the rich man's son goes free. As Jones says: " . . . it's 'is money got 'im off--Justice!"⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Galsworthy, The Silver Box, p. 79.

When, in an essay entitled "Justice,"⁴⁸ Galsworthy observed that the high cost of divorce had put its attainment out of reach of the poor, he was reiterating his belief that the courts favored the rich;

By no means think that this great principle of payment is confined merely to divorce; it underlies all justice in a greater or a less degree It is money that dictates the measure of justice and its methods.⁴⁹

The belief reappears in "A Lost Dog," of the same collection. A well-fed man reproves an unemployed outcast for appearing to believe there is a difference in justice for rich and poor. "If I am had up for begging as well as you, we shall both of us go to prison. The fact that I have no need to steal or beg . . . is hardly to the point . . . "⁵⁰ Again in the story entitled "A Commentary" an old man observes

You've got to pay for law same as you've got to pay for everything They talk about Justice, the same for rich and poor; that's all very fine, but there's a 'undred ways where a man that's poor has to suffer for it, because he can't pull the lawyer's tails and make 'em jump.⁵¹

It is evident that Galsworthy thought partiality toward the rich was defeating English justice.

⁴⁸ Galsworthy, A Commentary, pp. 241-51.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 250.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

The theme of the blindness of justice appears nowhere so strongly as in the play Justice (1910).⁵² In it Falder is committed to prison for the embezzling of funds as the result of his dire need. At his trial, despite his lawyer's pleading, the court makes no allowance for ameliorating circumstances. Falder's obvious nervous instability, his need for money, his desire to get his lover, Ruth Honeywell, out of England (doubly strong because of the brutal treatment Ruth is receiving from her husband) and his general unfitness to make his way in a harsh society are not considered by the court. Instead, the court chooses to weigh only the legal aspects of his deed, and since he is clearly guilty, sends him to prison, from which he emerges with his spirit broken.

In an unpublished preface to the play, Galsworthy explained that justice is blind " . . . because it is depart- or rather compart-mental."⁵³ Neither prosecutor, judge nor prison official knows enough of the "temperament and antecedents" of a prisoner to be able to judge what the

⁵² John Galsworthy, Plays: Second Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 1-109.

⁵³ Galsworthy, "An Unpublished Preface (Written in 1910)," A Sheaf, p. 160.

final effect of the legal process will be. Since all these persons, see only their own function, "it follows that punishment is almost always out of proportion."⁵⁴

IV. PRISONS

The punishment of crime, imprisonment, drew even sharper criticism from Galsworthy than did the legal process, and had, as will be seen, a much more immediate effect.

There is little in The Island Pharisees to indicate that Galsworthy had an absorbing interest in prisons, beyond a page or two in which he moralized about the unchristianity of a Society that still needed prisons to enforce its will.⁵⁵ Following The Island Pharisees, nothing more about prisons appeared until 1908 when Galsworthy suddenly fired what was to be the opening salvo of his campaign for prison reform. With the publication of A Commentary (1908) Galsworthy's objections to the prison system appear full-blown. The keynote is sounded by the philosophical old man in the first story of the book:⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵⁵ Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees, p. 145.

⁵⁶ Galsworthy, "A Commentary," A Commentary, pp. 3-15. This story outlines in a measure the themes of the book's other stories.

Take these fellers that they send to prison; they talk about reformin' of them, but when they get them there it's all like [a] roller, crushin' the life out
 Them fellers come out dead, with their minds squashed out o' them; an' all done with the best intentions. . . .⁵⁷

The impression one gets here of the inhuman, mechanical regularity of prison life is reinforced in "The House of Silence,"⁵⁸ wherein Galsworthy notes the perfect silence which prisoners are made to maintain at all times except on Sunday, when in chapel they are allowed to sing hymns in praise of the "silent God of prisoners."⁵⁹ The purpose of the imposition of silence, it appears, is so to "destroy" the prisoner's mind, through "bitter brooding and eternal silence," that the prisoner will be "cleansed of all social instinct." This done, Society, theoretically at least, can "form fresh minds" within the bodies "of which we [the prison authorities] take such care."⁶⁰ Such is the purpose of the prison. Galsworthy, to show the futility of the system, let a prisoner speak for himself: "To do the business proper," the prisoner said, "they gave me six months solitary [confinement] to start on."⁶¹ At the end of his

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 177-87.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 178.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 182, ff.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 183.

six months of brooding, said the prisoner, he had concluded only that he would have done again the deed⁶² for which he had gone to prison. Out of prison, his criminal record had prevented his getting a job. He had, therefore, taken to drink, and soon had been given "another little lot" with another six months' solitary confinement to "put me straight."⁶³ Ever since, the prisoner said, he had been a confirmed "out-and-outer" who alternated long prison terms with short periods in the world in which he could no longer make his way. In his essay "Order,"⁶⁴ Galsworthy deplored the unimaginativeness, the extreme dependence on routine, and the resistance to change exhibited by the "countless figures of officialdom" who make up the prison system. These habits of mind, thought Galsworthy, were responsible for the preservation of the "barbarous" system of treating prisoners.

Having outlined his objections to the prison system in A Commentary, Galsworthy spent the next two years in active campaigning for a change in the treatment of prisoners. Fraternity (1909) showed again a man's spirit

⁶² The prisoner had beaten a rival for "hangin' round my girl." Loc. cit.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 184.

⁶⁴ Galsworthy, A Commentary, pp. 191-99.

being broken in prison. "The Prisoner"⁶⁵ was a devastating comment on the effect of twenty years' confinement of a prisoner in Germany, with appropriate parallels drawn to the English prison system.

It was not, however, until he began his series of open letters addressed to various government officials through English periodicals and newspapers, that Galsworthy's campaign began to take effect. An open letter to England's Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, in May of 1909, protested against the physical, mental, and moral effects of solitary confinement, and urged "the complete abandonment of this closed-cell confinement, save when it is rendered necessary."⁶⁶ A second letter to the head of the Prison Commission⁶⁷ in July, and a third directed to the Home

⁶⁵ Galsworthy, A Motley, pp. 51-61. The story was written in 1909 as a result of a visit to the Moabit Prison in Berlin.

⁶⁶ Galsworthy, "On Prisons and Punishment," A Sheaf, p. 121. This letter, which appeared in The Nation, was a carefully documented work, with quotations (from prison officials, committees, and writers from both England and Europe), to show the futility and cruelty of solitary confinement.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 138-43. A letter written directly to Sir Evelyn Ruggles Brise, K.C.B., Prison Commission, Whitehall.

Secretary and the Prison Commissioners⁶⁸ resulted in the establishment of contact with the officials in charge of prisons, which led, on September 7 of 1909, to an interview with the Home Secretary, Mr. Gladstone. During the course of this interview Galsworthy was informed of plans to change the three, six, and nine month terms of solitary confinement to a uniform three months for all persons.⁶⁹ He had scored something of a victory for the inmates of the prisons.

He seems, not to have been satisfied, however, for he was at the time finishing the play Justice, which even more than his letters, was to be a public blow at the prison system.

The play, while it was aimed primarily at the blindness and disproportion of justice, had a scene⁷⁰ laid in a prison showing the effects of solitary confinement on the prisoners, and another⁷¹ showing how Society recoils from an ex-prisoner. The effect of both scenes was so

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 144-49. Entitled "A Minute on Separate Confinement....," it was the result of conferences with sixty convicts undergoing solitary confinement at Chelmsford and Lewes gaols, and indicated that over half of these prisoners thought they were suffering from the confinement. (p. 145). Some twenty-three of the prisoners' comments are included. (pp. 146-47).

⁶⁹ Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 250.

⁷⁰ Galsworthy, Justice, Act III, Sc. ii.

⁷¹ Galsworthy, Justice, Act IV.

emotionally heightened by the sufferings of Falder, the protagonist, that the play was certain to have a strong impact upon those persons who beheld it. When it was produced in February of 1910, Justice was witnessed by the new Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, and according to Galsworthy the play excited in Churchill such sympathy that he reduced the period of solitary confinement to one month for all except habitual criminals, who were given three months.⁷² In addition, he promised to introduce in the next session of Parliament a bill calling for further reforms, including modification of the ticket-of leave system,⁷³ provision of lectures and concerts for convicts, changes in the methods of dealing with youthful offenders and changes in the practice of imprisoning debtors.⁷⁴

Having succeeded so well in obtaining the abolition of the practice of solitary confinement, Galsworthy let the matter drop, except for one further article in The Daily

⁷² Galsworthy's diary as quoted in Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 261.

⁷³ Discharged prisoners were kept under close surveillance by the police for some time following discharge. It was this practice which caused the eventual death of Falder in Justice, for, having violated some of the system's requirements, he was rearrested. Unable to stand the thought of more time in prison, Falder committed suicide.

⁷⁴ Galsworthy's diary as quoted in Marrot, Life and Letters, p. 262.

Chronicle⁷⁵ (1910), in which he questioned the whole purpose and spirit of punishment. He struck at the continued existence of "the old theory, 'an eye for an eye,' condemned to death over nineteen hundred years ago,"⁷⁶ and said that such a spirit of revenge still caused the imprisonment of first offenders, solitary confinement, and the refusal of authorities to allow prisoners to talk to each other. Crime was a disease, he said; therefore criminals should not be treated in such a way as to make them less able to fight that disease. Prisons should be run more humanely, prison sentences should be given only for extreme offenses, and the whole "deterrent," or revenge, notion of imprisonment should be abandoned, to be replaced with a "more scientific and . . . more economic" means of dealing with crime.

Thus, though Galsworthy had won the lesser battle, he was still fighting the greater one: the battle for further prison reforms and a completely satisfactory and humane solution to the problem of how to treat criminals.

⁷⁵ Galsworthy, "The Spirit of Punishment (An Article in The Daily Chronicle, 1910)," A Sheaf, pp. 150-59.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 151-52.

V. THE CHURCH

Galsworthy's view of the Church of England is implied through his descriptions of the officers of that Church. The first of his pictures of the English cleric is in The Island Pharisees, (1904) where, through Shelton's eyes, Galsworthy delineates a country parson. He is kind, gentle, and hospitable; he offers all the hospitality of which he is capable (he is extremely poor because "livings have come down so terribly in value");⁷⁷ yet, in an argument, he mulishly insists that men's life (and woman's) should be governed, not by reason, but by the creed and the authority of the Church.⁷⁸

The Reverend Russell Barter of The Country House (1907) illustrates the type even more clearly. In charge of the rectory on Horace Pendyce's huge estate, the Rector supports the squire in all matters having to do with "the existing order of things,"⁷⁹ and watches over his parishioners from a "sound point of view" which enables him to find his "duty in life quite clear, and other people's perhaps clearer."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees, p. 157.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 158-64.

⁷⁹ Galsworthy, The Country House, p. 16.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

So sound is his point of view, in fact, that when he hears of a projected divorce, he finds it necessary to do all in his power to stop it. Like the parson of The Island Pharisees he is a believer in the Church's authority over the lives of its people.

"A Fisher of Men"⁸¹ (1908) shows a cleric more narrow in viewpoint than the parson and more harsh than the Reverend Barter. So sure is he that he is "placed by Providence beyond fear of being wrong" and so determined is he to "save at all costs the souls of men"⁸² that he literally preaches his parishioners out of the church and into rebellion against his ministrations. This was Galsworthy's clearest exposition of how the insistence of the Church in its authority results in the defeat of its own ends.

In "A Christian"⁸³ (1911), a clergyman worsted in an argument falls back on faith: "We are not permitted to know the way of this [the argument]; it is so ordained; we must

⁸¹ Galsworthy, A Motley, pp. 31-49.

⁸² Ibid., p. 37.

⁸³ John Galsworthy, The Inn of Tranquillity: Studies and Essays (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), pp. 61-69.

have faith."⁸⁴ "Reason--coherence--philosophy," he admits, are to him "nothing."⁸⁵

One clergyman, Michael Strangway in A Bit O' Love⁸⁶ (1914) diverged from the pattern Galsworthy had set, although his doing so only strengthened the theme that the Church lived by faith and authority. A sensitive and kindly young curate, he refuses to take legal action against his wife when she deserts him. In consequence, he finds himself criticized by the villagers for having "no zense o' what's his own praperty,"⁸⁷ and by the wife of his Rector for having failed to do his "duty." Unless he manages to "keep the whip hand," she tells him, the villagers will be able to "do what they like with us."⁸⁸ As a result he loses his faith and his belief in authority, and decides that love for "every living thing"⁸⁹ is the only alternative.

Galsworthy's objections to the Church were probably more temperamental than sociological, in that he hated

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁶ John Galsworthy, Plays; Fourth Series (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), pp. 1-84.

⁸⁷ Galsworthy, A Bit O' Love, p. 44.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 84.

narrowness of idea and insistence on authority in any walk of life. He noted that the Church was devoted to maintaining the authority of the upper classes, and the keeping unchanged of the status quo. For Galsworthy, who in all his writings of the first period advocated the breaking-down of the rigid class system of England, this alone was enough to make him distrust the Church.

VI. MORALITY

Galsworthy frequently concerned himself with the sexual morality of Society, and with Society's application of that morality on occasions when it works a hardship on those to whom it is applied. The three instances which appear in The Island Pharisees alone indicate quite accurately Galsworthy's beliefs.

The first instance concerns a man and woman (with three children) who, when they apply to a benevolent society for aid (the man is sick and unable to work) are turned away because the manager finds them to be unmarried. "We make a point of not encouraging sin," he explains.⁹⁰

The second instance was of a similar nature: the daughter of a wealthy landowner's gamekeeper has as the

⁹⁰ Galsworthy, The Island Pharisees, p. 125.

result of a village love-affair become pregnant. When she disobeys the landowner's order to marry at once, and when her father supports her in her refusal, the landowner retaliates by discharging the father and forcing him to leave the estate.⁹¹

The third incident concerned a member of the upper class, who has eloped with another man's wife. As a result of social ostracism, the man, who has once been well known in Society and has been mentioned as a prospect for election to Parliament, is forced to give up his political aspirations, to resign from the clubs and organizations to which he belongs and to retire to his country estate where he lives in isolation with his "wife."⁹²

While these three incidents were in no sense arguments to condone immorality, they did illustrate two of Galsworthy's beliefs: that Society's narrow moral code was not always applicable to people who have given way to passion, and that Society's disapproval often caused needless pain to those ostracized, and in the case of the poor, actual want and privation.

Galsworthy gave several examples of the way in which the poor were made to suffer by the misapplication of

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 301-302.

⁹² Ibid., p. 301.

Society's morality. Jones (The Silver Box, 1906) is discharged for "setting such a bad example" to the other workers by not being married to the woman with whom he lives.⁹³ Squire Pendyce (The Country House, 1907) discharges a gamekeeper, and evicts him from his cottage for having "got into a scrape with the postman's wife."⁹⁴ Falder (Justice, 1909) is required by his former employer, as a prerequisite to reemployment after he has been released from prison, to "have done with" the woman for whose sake he has committed the crime that had led to his imprisonment. The injustice of this demand, to Falder, is that he has "gone through all that [imprisonment] for nothing."⁹⁵ Each of these three incidents illustrates the harm which enforcement of Society's narrow views of sexual morality could cause.

One important view of Society's morality appeared in The Eldest Son (1909).⁹⁶ Here Galsworthy showed that just as there was a difference in justice for rich and for poor, so was there a difference in the application of moral standards to the two classes. Sir William Cheshire, a baronet and large landowner, threatens one of his workers

⁹³ Galsworthy, The Silver Box, p. 29.

⁹⁴ Galsworthy, The Country House, p. 135.

⁹⁵ Galsworthy, Justice, p. 100.

⁹⁶ Galsworthy, Plays: Second Series, pp. 3-74.

with loss of employment unless he marries a village girl whom he has gotten with child. Yet when the baronet's oldest son does the same thing with one of the housemaids, the baronet is horrified when his son proposes to marry her, and threatens to disinherit him. He objects, because of the loss of social prestige the family would suffer, to living by the same social code he so willingly enforces on those over whom he exercises authority.

These, then, were Galsworthy's criticisms of Society's moral code: it was too severely applied; its application often caused physical as well as mental suffering to those to whom it was applied; and it was applied less strictly to the rich than to the poor.

VII. WAR

In the years between 1890 and 1914, England and Germany (together with the rest of Europe) were, as a result of rivalry in "colonial acquisition, commercial aggrandisement, naval expansion, and world dominion. . . ,"⁹⁷ drifting ever closer to war. Between 1905 and 1914, feeling between Germany and England became so tense with every disagreement

⁹⁷ Edward Maslin Hulme, A History of the British People (New York and London: The Century Co., 1924), p. 676.

between the two nations that war began to appear inevitable.⁹⁸ A near-crisis occurred in 1909, when England became alarmed at the rate of speed with which Germany was building battleships. Speculation on the possibility of war in the newspapers at the time led Galsworthy to protest against their assumptions that a war must come.

In an article to The Daily Mail entitled "The Will to Peace," he professed to be shocked by the sight of a newspaper poster bearing the title "Why England and Germany Must Go to War."⁹⁹ Speculating as to who could wish for a war which could only mean loss of lives and money, and the cessation of social progress, he decided that the people whose frame of mind was reflected in the poster were those who would say that "men have always killed each other for their own advantage and always will"¹⁰⁰ They were the sort of people, said Galsworthy, who overlooked the fact that war would not further in any way the cheapening of "bread and coals," the spread of education, the growth of arts and science, or the

⁹⁸ Ramsay Muir, A Short History of the British Commonwealth (New York: World Book Company, 1923), II, pp. 765-67.

⁹⁹ Galsworthy, "The Will to Peace (from The Daily Mail, 1909," A Sheaf, p. 205.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 208.

preservation of the strongest males "for the improvement of the human stock."¹⁰¹ Such people regarded war as a natural state, and hence failed to try to stop its occurrence.

Galsworthy, alarmed as he was by the poster, decided that war was not inevitable, if only because men have "always found a way in which to fulfil that on which they have set their hearts."¹⁰² If there were a strong will to peace in the hearts of men, there need be no war, he concluded, and to believe that war was inevitable was "to blaspheme, to belittle human nature . . ."¹⁰³

Two years earlier, only eight years after the invention of the first successful airplane by the Wright brothers in 1903, Galsworthy protested against "this prostitution of the conquest of the air to the ends of warfare."¹⁰⁴ Every "thinker," he said, must, at the prospect of aerial warfare, feel "horror" of what must come of it and "despair" that men could be "so hopelessly and childishly the slaves of their own marvellous inventive powers."¹⁰⁵ Men could do sufficient killing, he thought on

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 207.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 209.

¹⁰³ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Galsworthy, "Peace of the Air (A Letter to The Times, 1911)," A Sheaf, p. 210.

¹⁰⁵ Loc. cit.

"water and earth"; therefore, while there was still time, the "new and ghastly menace" of air power must be banned, and mankind saved "from this last and worst of all its follies."¹⁰⁶

Galsworthy's third objection to war was, oddly enough, aimed at the Boer War. In The Mob¹⁰⁷ (1913) he struck at rampant national patriotism engendered in the English by the war, and at the mob's blind, murderous feeling against those who dared to say anything counter to their beliefs. Stephen More, a member of Parliament, believes that England is unfair to force its "will and . . . dominion"¹⁰⁸ on the Boers, who love their independence as much as does England. Outspoken and sincere in his beliefs, he makes a series of public speeches against the war, despite the advice of his friends and family, and at each speech is treated progressively worse by the audience. So unpopular does he become that at length a mob invades his home, and after hearing Stephen call it "contemptible," "spiritless," "brainless," "mean," "cowardly" and "unpatriotic," the mob kills him.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁰⁷ Galsworthy, Plays: Third Series, pp. 1-77.

¹⁰⁸ Galsworthy, The Mob, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

Galsworthy provided an ironic touch by showing how, when passions engendered by the war have cooled, the country comes to consider Stephen a great man, and a defender of free speech. He objected, in this play, to the mob "law of force" which prevented a man from saying what he thought. Such practice was anathema to Galsworthy.

VIII. PARLIAMENT

One serious obstacle to social progress, declared Galsworthy, was Parliament--the very group whose job it was to make sure that England progressed socially. "On Procedure in Parliament,"¹¹⁰ (1914), protested that although the members of Parliament were paid to transact the business of the country, they failed to take action to prevent some "abhorrent practices" which had continued year after year--such practices as the "sweating" of workers, bad housing conditions, employment of boys at work too hard for them, the insufficient feeding of children and a whole list of cruelties to animals.¹¹¹ These would require only slight expenditure of public money and Parliamentary time, yet Parliament did nothing about them. It lacked a "sense of

¹¹⁰ Galsworthy, "On Procedure in Parliament (A Letter to The Times, 1914)," A Sheaf, pp. 98-101.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

proportion" and a "sense of humor"; it wasted time on "things already talked into their graves . . . ," it listened to "the same partisan bickerings . . . which everyone knows by heart," and it accomplished nothing.¹¹² "Party business," said Galsworthy, occupied far too much time that should be spent in the "redress of crying shames."¹¹³

Both from the foregoing article and from another of the same year, entitled "Passing," (in which ghosts of the neglected bills pass before the writer as a member of Parliament tells him the last session has been passed in having a "glorious scrap"¹¹⁴), Galsworthy made it clear that he considered party politics and redundant debate to be prime obstacles in the way of urgent social legislation.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 100.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 101.

¹¹⁴ Galsworthy, "Passing (From The Westminster Gazette, 1914)," A Sheaf, p. 113.

CHAPTER III

THE WAR YEARS (1914-1918)

Great Britain, on August 5, 1914, entered the first World War. The complex of tensions¹ in European politics had at last exploded, and England, motivated by the desire for self-preservation, and by anger at the violation of Belgian neutrality, was drawn into the war on the side of the Allies.² German armies attacked France through Belgium and drove nearly to Paris before they were stopped in the desperate battle of the Marne River. Retreating then to positions along the Aisne River, the Germans dug in, and the "long war of the trenches" was begun--a bloody, indecisive deadlock.³ The war continued, with great casualties but relatively little change in the position of the combatting forces, until November, 1918, when Germany, after her failure at the second Marne battle and after the surrender of her allies, at last elected to ask for peace.⁴

¹ Cf. ante, pp. 42-3.

² Travelyan, op. cit., p. 699.

³ Hulme, op. cit., p. 681.

⁴ Ibid., p. 684.

During the war years tremendous social changes occurred in England. The Labor party, first represented in Parliament in 1906, gained greatly in power.⁵ Women's suffrage, on a restricted basis, was grudgingly allowed just before the war's end, with the result that six million women were granted the right to vote.⁶ A new school law provided higher pay for teachers, increased funds for schools, and compulsory attendance of schools for all children below the age of fourteen. More important, it made illegal the employing during school days of children, thus putting a stop to much of the use of child labor and remedying "in part" a "social problem created . . . by the Industrial Revolution."⁷ Possibly the greatest change occurred among the working classes of England, who, paid higher wages, given better working conditions, full employment, and "unity of purpose" during the war years, began to feel that such conditions should continue in times of peace.⁸ They at least looked forward to an improvement in their living conditions, and, having had a taste of these conditions, were likely to use their growing power in an attempt to make them last.

⁵ Ibid., p. 689.

⁶ Ibid., p. 690.

⁷ Ibid., p. 691.

⁸ Ibid., p. 694.

I. THE WAR

As was noted in Chapter I,⁹ Galsworthy had expressed the belief that war was too expensive in lives and money and that it meant the end, for a time, of social progress. He had hoped also that the "will to peace" would prevent mankind from resorting to war as a means of settling its quarrels. But when the war came, he accepted it as necessary and set to work with his pen.

His first writings, following the commencement of the war, contained what appear to be conventional patriotic sentiments. In "Credo" (1914) Galsworthy justified England's entry into the war by saying that even though war was an "outrage" and a "black stain on humanity and the fame of man," it was the duty of England, as a democracy to go to the aid of Belgium when she was invaded.¹⁰ "France" and "Reveille" (both written in 1914) expressed indignation at the hardships suffered by France and Belgium respectively.¹¹ "First Thoughts on This War" prophesied that the war would

⁹ Cf. ante, p. 43.

¹⁰ Galsworthy, "Credo (From The Neutral Press, 1914)," A Sheaf, p. 216.

¹¹ Galsworthy, "France (From The Westminster Gazette, 1914)," A Sheaf, pp. 219-20, and "Reveille (From King Albert's Book, 1914)," A Sheaf, pp. 221-23.

mean the death of "dogmatic Christianity" and the birth of "an ethic Christianity that men really practise."¹² It called for the death of "despotic" governments such as were found in Germany and Austria, and blamed war on the "military bureaucracy" which goaded peaceable peoples into war.¹³ Another section advised the "military bureaucrats" who had started the war to "come and sniff for one moment that acrid smell in the homes of the poor" of all the warring countries before talking of "national aspirations and necessities."¹⁴ He protested against the disregard for truth exhibited by those writers of newspaper articles and books who "with glowing pen call up in the reader the feeling that war is glorious."¹⁵ Finally, he noted that although the war meant temporary defeat for "all Utopians, . . . idealists, humanitarians, [and] lovers of peace and the arts,"¹⁶ they would, nevertheless, continue to fight the "god of force" and would eventually, "plant their poor flag

¹² Galsworthy, "First Thoughts on This War (From Scribner's Magazine, 1914)," A Sheaf, p. 225.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 227 and 230.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 232.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 238.

a little further on,"¹⁷ despite the war. Thus Galsworthy ended the year 1914 on a hopeful note, after his initial outcry against war.

1915 found him looking forward, both hopefully, and fearfully, to the time when the war would end. "The Hope of Lasting Peace," labelling the feeling of nationality a "frank abettor of the devilish maxim: 'Might is right,'"¹⁸ called for the alteration of boundaries to make homogeneous national groups and elimination of minorities, so that so-called "national" causes for war would not exist. This step, however, would be but the precursor to the establishing everywhere of democratic governments. Only when this was done, said Galsworthy, "shall we begin to draw the breath of real assurance."¹⁹ But if "aggressive nationalism" was not killed, and if Central European states (including Germany and Austria) did not become democratic, then "We may whistle for a changed Europe."²⁰ The conditions which had caused the World War would remain to cause another one.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 239-40.

¹⁸ Galsworthy, "The Hope of Lasting Peace (From a Symposium on Nationality, 1915)," A Sheaf, p. 244.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 249.

Four other articles appeared in 1915, not including a novel, The Freelanders, which will be considered in the section entitled "The Land Problem."²¹ "Diagnosis of the Englishman"²² was a thoughtful analysis of the English character which concluded that the Englishman's tenacity, humor, and lack of imagination were the qualities which accounted for his good showing as a soldier. "Literature and the War,"²³ an attempt to measure the effect of war on the imaginative writer, said war would dry up the creative impulse, but that it would burst out again after peace had returned. "Art and the War"²⁴ made much the same point. The fourth article of 1915, "Second Thoughts on This War,"²⁵ while it tended to reiterate the themes of "First Thoughts," made, nevertheless, some new observations. One was that people at war lose their sense of fairness and proportion, they praise in their own soldiers what they condemn in an

²¹ Cf. post, pp. 66-8.

²² Galsworthy, "Diagnosis of the Englishman (From the Amsterdamer Revue, 1915)," A Sheaf, pp. 250-62.

²³ Galsworthy, "Literature and the War (From the Times Literary Supplement, 1915)," A Sheaf, pp. 263-69.

²⁴ Galsworthy, "Art and the War (From the Atlantic Monthly and Fortnightly Review, 1915)," A Sheaf, pp. 270-82.

²⁵ Galsworthy, "Second Thoughts on This War (From Scribner's Magazine, 1915)," A Sheaf, pp. 288-312.

enemy, whether it be act, thought, or feeling.²⁶ Another was that a "United States of the World"²⁷ be used as a means of promoting "international decency" and stopping aggression. A third was that the war must be considered a "War of ideals," aimed at the advancement of human, rather than material needs; otherwise, war, with its tremendous expenditure of life, would be "too intolerable even to think of."²⁸

1916 brought six more articles and papers on the war. "Tre Cime Di Lavaredo"²⁹ expressed nostalgia for the Italian Tyrol country, then the scene of fighting. "Totally Disabled"³⁰ made a plea for money for the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers. "Cartoon"³¹ was a fantasy in which the ghosts of soldiers killed in the war expressed their dissatisfaction with the older generations who had started the

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 295-96.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 301.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 307.

²⁹ Galsworthy, "Tre Cime Di Lavaredo (From the Book of Italy, 1916)," A Sheaf, pp. 283-87.

³⁰ Galsworthy, "Totally Disabled (From The Observer, 1916)," A Sheaf, pp. 313-17.

³¹ Galsworthy, "Cartoon (From 'The English Nation,' 1916)," A Sheaf, pp. 318-21.

war. "Harvest"³² hoped that the millions who died in the war would not have died vainly, and that a lasting peace would result from their efforts.

"And--After?"³³ was perhaps the most important of Galsworthy's papers of 1916. Divided into five parts, it concerns itself with political and social conditions as Galsworthy expected them to be after the war, and more important, it advocated immediate planning and action for the advent of the peace, so that England--and the world too--would not slump back into pre-war ways. He demanded first a "League for Peace," made up of all nations, which would have the machinery for arbitration, the intent to use it, and the force to make its decisions obeyed. The defeated nations, he said, would thirst for vengeance unless they were accustomed, by force if necessary, to arbitrate their quarrels. The role of the League for Peace would be to enforce arbitration until the conquered nations, as well as the victorious ones, came habitually to recognize and to use the method. If, however, the League for Peace failed

³² Galsworthy, "Harvest (From The Book of the Homeless, 1916)," A Sheaf, pp. 322-24.

³³ Galsworthy, "And--After? (From The Observer, 1916)," A Sheaf, pp. 327-37.

to "get men's minds used to"³⁴ arbitration, the war would have to be fought again "in a few years' time."³⁵

If it was important to secure the peace abroad, it was equally important, to Galsworthy, to clean up certain shameful conditions in England. The question of Irish freedom must be settled by allowing Ireland to decide for herself what her position in the Empire would be. To return to the civil strife which had marked British-Irish relations in the past would be "criminal lunacy," thought Galsworthy.³⁶ Another immediate "act of justice" would be to give women the vote, with such limitations as would equalize their voting power with that of the men. Women, he said had earned the vote by their work and suffering during the war.³⁷ He wanted England's defense assured by the maintenance of a sort of National Guard, the basis for which would be a four-month training period yearly for boys between fourteen and eighteen years of age, and following that a short period (three to six months) of military service "to convert them into potential soldiers."³⁸ Training for the boys would be

³⁴ Ibid., p. 329.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 328.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 336-37.

³⁷ Galsworthy, "And--After," A Sheaf, pp. 337-38.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 342.

largely in trades, crafts, or occupations which would fit them to earn a living. Such a plan, he said, would benefit both the youth of England, and the country itself, since a large force of men would be kept trained against the event of another war.

Other "glaring national ills" demanding "immediate, sustained, and resolute attention"³⁹ were slums, the housing problem, infant mortality, the proper care and feeding of children, control (by state ownership if necessary) of the liquor trade, and a change in Parliamentary procedure to allow "time for the serious and uninterrupted consideration of non-party measures and furtherance of needed reforms."⁴⁰ But most important, said Galsworthy, was that some thinking be done in time of war about what to do after the peace, and that advantage be taken of the new-found national unity of classes to solve the problems of peace-time. "It would be heartbreaking," he said, "if from this stupendous cataclysm no lasting good to the world and to Britain can be brought forth."⁴¹ In "The Island of the Blessed," Galsworthy asked much the same question: " . . . shall the Ironie Spirit fill

³⁹ Ibid., p. 354.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 361.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 365.

the whole world with his laughter? Or shall the nations take the first step in that grand march of real deliverance . . . ?"⁴²

It appears, then, that Galsworthy as early as 1916 was looking ahead to the end of the war, and agitating for a complete social and political clean-up, to end, once and for all, the ills of the world and of England. He was also realist enough to see that if action were not taken at once, with the end of the war, that it never would be taken, and that the world would drift back into its former state.

Galsworthy's only play of the war years, The Foundations,⁴³ was also aimed at the necessity for immediate action on the problem of the social reconstruction of England. Although he called The Foundations an "extravagant" play, it carries an undertone of serious prophecy when Lemmy tells Lord Dromondy, as a threatening mob appears outside his mansion:

If all you wealfy nobbs wiv kepital 'ad come it kind from the start after the war yer'd never a' been 'earin' the Marseillaisy naow. Lord! 'Ow you did talk abaht unity and a noo spirit in the country. Noo spirit! Why, soon as ever there was no danger from outside, yer started to make it from inside, wiv an iron 'and.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., p. 393.

⁴³ Galsworthy, Plays: Fourth Series, pp. 1-90.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

James, the skeptical footman, who after his discharge as a soldier has been employed by Lord Dromondy, is no more optimistic than Lenny. James has, he complains, found himself in no better position at the end of the war than he had been at the beginning; consequently, having saved some money, he intends to emigrate from England in search of the opportunity denied him at home.⁴⁵

The conclusion is that since Society has chosen to go back to its old habits and ways of thinking, and since it once more allows misery and squalor to exist among a large part of the population (as typified by Lenny's mother who barely exists on her wages in a "sweated" industry), nothing remains but to tear down Society, and rebuild it from its foundations--the poorest people of the country. Of course, Galsworthy was being ironical when he wrote the play, and it is doubtful that he really thought revolution was in the offing; nevertheless, the play is as clear a warning in its way as were the writings in A Sheaf that something had better be done to solve England's social and economic problems.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

In 1917, Galsworthy wrote Beyond,⁴⁶ a novel of love with little of social significance in it, and four more articles dealing with the war, or with the war's effects on England. "The Sacred Work"⁴⁷ was an appeal for spiritual as well as physical rehabilitation of the disabled soldier. "The Balance-Sheet of the Soldier-Workman," foretold the return from war of toughened, skeptical soldiers, who when they went back to their jobs, would have to be convinced by their employers that a better spirit prevailed in industrial relations; otherwise, the ex-soldier might "take things into his own hands."⁴⁸ Again, Galsworthy was warning of the need for planning of the social world and rectification of social problems. "The Children's Jewel Fund" (1915) was an appeal for money to maintain Infant Welfare Centers, whose purpose was to provide free medical care for mothers and babies of the poorer classes.⁴⁹ "France, 1916-1917" expressed

⁴⁶ John Galsworthy, Three Novels of Love: The Dark Flower, Beyond, Saint's Progress (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), pp. 221-481.

⁴⁷ Galsworthy, "The Sacred Work," Another Sheaf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), pp. 4-13.

⁴⁸ Galsworthy, "The Balance-Sheet of the Soldier-Workman," Another Sheaf, p. 45.

⁴⁹ Galsworthy, "The Children's Jewel Fund," Another Sheaf, pp. 46-52.

61

admiration for the part played by that nation in the war.⁵⁰
"Englishman and Russian"⁵¹ was a comparison of the
characters of those two peoples, and "American and Briton"
called for closer cooperation between England and the
United States in "democratising the whole world."⁵² Most
of Galsworthy's 1917 writings, as can be seen, were
humanitarian propaganda, of the sort Galsworthy produced so
much of during the war.

In 1918, Five Tales, which had little to do with the
war, was Galsworthy's only imaginative work. Again Gals-
worthy's essay-type writings made up the bulk of his work
for the year. "Grotesques"⁵³ reiterated, in satiric form,
the probable consequences to England should she go back to
her pre-war attitudes. Here the England of 1947 (Galsworthy
set his scene twenty years in the future) was shown to be a
country composed chiefly of vast, sprawling cities, devoted
entirely to manufacturing, and peopled by swarms of poor
factory-workers and wealthy businessmen, all of whom were
unhappy, irreligious, and possessed of extremely vulgar

⁵⁰ Galsworthy, "France, 1916-1917," Another Sheaf,
pp. 53-61.

⁵¹ Galsworthy, "Englishman and Russian," Another
Sheaf, pp. 82-87.

⁵² Galsworthy, "American and Briton," Another
Sheaf, p. 109.

⁵³ Galsworthy, "Grotesques," Another Sheaf, pp. 245-
336.

tastes. Laws were unchanged, the divorce and criminal laws being the same as they had been in 1918, and the country was utterly devoted to pursuit of material interests. In "Grotesques," as in The Foundations, Galsworthy called attention to the immediate need for reform by drawing a picture of what might happen should the reforms not be carried out.

"Speculations" struck at "herd-life," the practice of living, acting, and thinking in masses, and at man's increased dependence on machinery. Civilization, thought Galsworthy, was "rushing down the high cliff into the sea, possessed and pursued by the devils of--machinery."⁵⁴ The best and only cure for such a state of affairs was an education "in the longer sense" provided by the "highest minds and finest spirits" available, and aimed at "higher ideals of conduct, learning, manners, and taste."⁵⁵ Education, to Galsworthy, was the "only agent really capable of improving the trend of civilisation"⁵⁶

Although the war ended in 1918, two of the novels appearing in 1919 dealt directly with the war, and hence

⁵⁴ Galsworthy, "Speculations," Another Sheaf, p. 151.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 152-54.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 152-53. This was substantially the same program that Galsworthy advocated prior to the war. Cf. ante, pp. 23-25.

will be included here. Saint's Progress,⁵⁷ concerns itself chiefly with the spiritual struggle of an English clergyman to adjust himself to the war and to the moral problems arising therefrom. The chief problem it attacks is that of the people's growing dissatisfaction with the Church's authority and its dogma. George Laird, the minister's son-in-law, typifies the new generation's lack of belief. A doctor and scientist, he finds the Church to be "a sort of business that no one can take too seriously"⁵⁸ and prophesies that for faith in religion there will be substituted a faith in humanity and work, or as he expresses it, in "living and pressure to the square inch."⁵⁹

As George Laird symbolizes loss of faith, Nollie (the minister's daughter) symbolizes the new revolt against the authority of the church. Forbidden by her father to make a war marriage, she and her lover consummate a marriage of fact. When she is left with an illegitimate child and wishes, after the death of her lover in the war, to marry another man, her father again forbids, on the ground that the new lover has had an affair with another woman, and is thus indissolubly bound to her. Again Nollie disobeys both father and church.

⁵⁷ Galsworthy, Three Novels of Love, pp. 485-739.

⁵⁸ Galsworthy, Saint's Progress, p. 679.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 582.

"We want," she says, "to think and decide things for ourselves, . . . we can't take things at second-hand any longer."⁶⁰

It was left, however, to Pierre Lavendie, the French soldier-artist, to explain why the authority of the church and its dependence on faith had been so flouted in wartime. War, he says, is a great "forcing-house," in which human "plants" are made to grow too fast, and "each quality, each passion; hate and love, intolerance and lust and avarice, courage, and energy" is being "forced."⁶¹ If Lavendie's explanation was true, then it was natural that the rift between the church and the people should grow more rapidly. Thus it appears that Galsworthy was trying to show how the war had affected one of the country's strongest and most settled institutions, the Anglican church.

In The Burning Spear⁶² (1919) Galsworthy had a final and exceedingly satiric fling at the war. Through Mr. John

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 684.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 633.

⁶² John Galsworthy, The Burning Spear: Being the Experiences of Mr. John Lavender in Time of War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923). This book, according to Marrot (Life and Letters, pp. 477-78) was first published anonymously in 1919, and did not, until 1923, appear under the author's name.

Lavender, a gullible, patriotic little man who believes everything he reads, Galsworthy showed what confusion, injustice, and cruelty resulted from the preachings of "public men" in the newspapers in time of war. Reading, for instance, that the English should as a revenge measure, keep the German prisoners who work on their land in a state of semi-starvation, Lavender sets out to exhort the people to do their duty and starve the Germans.⁶³ Again, because he has read that conscientious objectors to war are traitors, he goes out of his way to give a tongue-lashing to the first objector he encounters.⁶⁴ When he hears that a German-born dentist is still practicing in London (as he has for years), Mr. Lavender, inspired by the preachings of the newspapers, wishes to have the man interned.⁶⁵ On each occasion, however, Lavender is saved by his innate humanity, which causes him, despite what he has read, to help rather than to persecute those persons whom the papers dislike. Joe Petty, the cynic, finally shows Mr. Lavender the weakness of his premise that everything he reads is true, by hinting that an "Unseen Power," rather than public opinion, is at the back of the

⁶³ Ibid., p. 89.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 116-18.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 173-74.

utterances which so inflamed him.⁶⁶ Mr. Lavender, shaken by the thought that actually he knows nothing of the war except what he reads in the papers, is constrained at last to conclude that he, like his countrymen, is suffering from a "disease" which is "impairing the sanity of my countrymen and making them a race of second-hand spiritual drunkards."⁶⁷ This was the crux of Galsworthy's criticism of the war-- that people abandoned their sense of fair play and justice, to go on an emotional orgy which often caused injustice and injury to such unfortunate people as the conscientious objector, the German prisoner, or the alien.

II. THE LAND PROBLEM

One of the elements of the land problem,⁶⁸ an important one, was the ownership by a few people of a great deal of England's land, and the autocratic methods the few used to control their laborers. Occasionally the landowner's control amounted to tyranny, and it was with this tyranny and the consequent disappearance of the sturdy farm laborer from the land that Galsworthy was concerned in

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 191-92.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 246.

⁶⁸ Cf. ante, p. 7.

The Freelands of 1915. In this novel, which indicated his first concern with the land problem as such,⁶⁹ he used the landowner's tyranny as the basis for the plot. Sir Gerald Malloring evicts one of his laborers who has run counter to his wife's religious prejudices. Malloring justifies his act by saying that the laborer, Tryst, is being evicted for the "good of the village,"⁷⁰ lest its morals suffer. Another laborer is evicted because his daughter was "leading the young men astray."⁷¹ In both instances, laborers are being made to suffer because their morals, which presumably are their own business, have offended the landlord. In the subsequent strike, fomented largely by the Freelands family, Tryst is imprisoned, and the strike ruthlessly broken by the use of strikebreakers, police, and the local magistrates. The strike results only in the death of Tryst, the laborers' return to work under the conditions against which they had rebelled, and the continued control of land and laborers by the Mallorings.

⁶⁹ In The Island Pharisees (1904) and The Country House (1907), Galsworthy had noted some elements of the land problem, particularly that of the close control of the people on the land by the landowner or "Squire." In these novels, however, Galsworthy was not aiming directly at exposition of the land problem.

⁷⁰ John Galsworthy, The Freelands (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 50.

⁷¹ Loc. cit.

In the same novel, Galsworthy pointed out other reasons why the laborers quit the land. One was that since many great estates were used only for grazing and game-cover, few laborers or farmers were needed.⁷² Another was that town life, with its more abundant pleasures and excitements, drew the laborers from the farm.⁷³ A third, and important, reason was that the agricultural laborer's wages were too low.⁷⁴

Whatever the causes, the laborer was leaving the land or being driven off it, and the rural population was getting smaller and smaller. The significance of this fact to Galsworthy was that the land was a breeding-ground for a strong, healthy citizenry, and a source of new blood to improve the debilitated population of the towns.⁷⁵

A year later in "The Islands of the Blessed,"⁷⁶ Galsworthy referred to the effect of city life on the Englishman as "town blight"--a "tendency to jut here and

⁷² Ibid., p. 276.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 256.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 258.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

⁷⁶ Galsworthy, "The Islands of the Blessed," A Sheaf, pp. 371-93.

and be squashed in there; an over-narrowness of head; an overdevelopment of this feature at the expense of that"77 It must be cured, he said, both by improving town living conditions and by "going back to the land."78

In two long articles on the land, written in 1917 and 1918,79 Galsworthy concluded that in the event of another war the land would be the nation's salvation. England, because of the development of submarine and aerial warfare, was no longer an island in "any save a technically geographic sense."80 Since it would be impossible to stop an air and submarine assault from destroying the merchant navy, upon which England depended for her food, the country was faced with the choice between growing her own food, or being "knocked out . . . in the first round."81 Therefore, from the military standpoint alone, it was necessary for England to become agriculturally self-supporting.

Another weakness of England was that her town-bred people were undergoing "great deterioration" physically, and

77 Ibid., pp. 375-76.

78 Ibid., p. 374.

79 Galsworthy, "The Land, 1917," and "The Land, 1918," Another Sheaf, pp. 169-204 and 205-44.

80 Galsworthy, "The Land, 1917," Another Sheaf, p. 169.

81 Ibid., p. 173.

were in need of more "fresh air, good food, sunlight, and a modicum of solitude . . ." ⁸²

Therefore, because England would in the next war be dependent upon herself alone for food, and because the majority of her population was suffering from town-blight, Galsworthy saw no way out but "an increased country population and the growth of our own food." ⁸³ He made five suggestions for the achievement of this end, the first being the building of a "solid economic basis to the growth of our food," including a greater amount of land under cultivation, well-paid and well-housed workers, and a "livened village life," which would keep the rural population from drifting to the cities. ⁸⁴ His second suggestion was for the establishing of a "vast number of small holdings [farms of only a few acres], state-created, with cooperative working." ⁸⁵ This idea, incidentally, had already been made into a law by the Small Holdings Act of 1907, but largely because of the landlords' opposition, it had not been successful. ⁸⁶

⁸² Ibid., pp. 180-81.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 189.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 190.

⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

⁸⁶ Alden, op. cit., pp. 249-51.

Galsworthy's third suggestion was for the laying out of a "wide belt-system of garden allotments round every town, industrial or not."⁸⁷ Here his purpose was to provide fresh food and fresh air for townspeople, both of which they would obtain by working in their garden-allotments. His fourth was for the making of "Drastic improvements in housing, feeding, and sanitation in the towns themselves," and his fifth, for the providing of "Education that shall raise not only the standard of knowledge but the standard of taste in town and country."⁸⁸

It is obvious that Galsworthy was aiming at more than the improvement of England's agriculture. The solving of the land problem, in fact, was to him only a stepping-stone to a higher achievement: the mitigation of England's "town-blight," the strengthening of the physique of her population, and the attainment of a national self-sufficiency in food production which would make her independent of foreign or colonial food-supplies in the event of another war.

As he did with other social problems, Galsworthy wanted to use the impetus and stimulation of the war to

⁸⁷ Galsworthy, "The Land, 1917," Another Sheaf, p. 190.

⁸⁸ Loc. cit.

solve the land problem before England settled down again into her pre-war habits and traditions. "This," he said, "is the moment for full and free discussion of it, for full and free action too."⁸⁹ He thought the time especially good to get men back to the soil by offering lands to the millions of soldiers who would be demobilized. It would be "the chance of our lives to put men on the land."⁹⁰ All that was needed was to give the government a mandate to go "Full steam ahead."⁹¹

"The Land, 1918" comes to the same conclusion after a wealth of statistical detail: "Resettlement of the land, and independence of outside food supply, is the only hope of welfare and safety for this country."⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 192.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁹² Galsworthy, "The Land, 1918," Another Sheaf, p. 244.

CHAPTER IV

THE POST-WAR PERIOD (1919-1933)

The period following the end of World War I was, generally speaking, one of pitched battles between capital and labor on both political and economic fronts. The Labor and Conservative parties waged a see-saw struggle, in which neither held the upper hand very long, for control of Parliament. The main issues were the nationalization of certain industries, such as coal mining and transportation, and the heavy taxing of large incomes to pay for the war and for the improvement of social conditions.¹ Two great strikes, both of which failed, resulted from the struggle over the nationalization of the coal industry: the coal strike of 1921,² and the so-called General Strike of coal and transportation workers in 1926.³

There were other problems as well. The end of the war brought such widespread unemployment in 1920-21 that the period has been called "one of the most distressful

¹ Hulme, op. cit., p. 700.

² Ibid., p. 696.

³ Wilhelm Dibelius, England (translated from the German by Mary Agnes Hamilton, M.P., with an introduction by A. D. Lindsay; New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, [n.d.]), p. 110.

. . . since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution."⁴ Unemployment brought with it a feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction with the government, and a widespread demand, despite ameliorative measures, that some "fundamental remedy"⁵ be applied. If the working classes were unhappy, so were the wealthier classes, as their tax burdens were increased by war debts and social spending programs. As prices and taxes increased and swallowed up fixed incomes which before the war had been quite adequate,⁶ the aristocracy and gentry were gradually replaced by war-wealthy newcomers. Manners and morals changed as the Victorian-Edwardian conventionality and gentility gave way to "moral looseness," scorn of church discipline, license in sex relations, and belief in "self-expression."⁷

Fundamentally, however, the post-war period was one in which "unfettered individualistic capitalism,"⁸ (which between the Industrial Revolution and the end of the nineteenth century had gone on its way relatively unchecked),

⁴ Hulme, op. cit., p. 695.

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Dibelius, op. cit., p. 481.

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ Loc. cit.

retreated, albeit stubbornly, before the increasing strength of the working classes. It was a time of great turmoil and confusion, of uncertainty and bitterness, yet it produced such important social advances as minimum wages for workers, state supervision of industrial coalitions, broadened suffrage, and heavy taxation of "unearned" income.⁹ Above all, the period marked the realization of most Englishmen that the nineteenth-century way of life was gone, and that it would not return.

In this period of change and unrest Galsworthy wrote with a vigor and a fecundity approaching that of his pre-war days. Perhaps the most notable of his achievements after the war was the completion of The Forsyte Saga and the writing of two more trilogies.¹⁰ However, his output was by no means limited to just those works. Eight more plays appeared, in addition to several volumes of short stories, lectures, and essays. As a social critic, Galsworthy continued to comment on such contemporary problems as the divorce laws, women's rights, poverty, justice, the prison system, the land, and lesser matters. His beliefs

⁹ Ibid., p. 484.

¹⁰ A Modern Comedy and End of the Chapter.

on divorce and women's rights, because they appear immediately after the war in the last two books of The Forsyte Saga,¹¹ will be discussed first.

I. DIVORCE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Galsworthy's criticisms of the divorce laws changed from his first-period criticisms only as the divorce laws themselves changed: not at all in the letter, but greatly in the spirit with which they were obeyed. In Chancery and To Let, illustrate Galsworthy's view of the change that occurred in Society's attitude toward the divorce laws. In Chancery (1920), illustrates once more the Victorian attitude to divorce by telling the story of Soames Forsyte's divorce from Irene in 1896.¹² It describes Soames' maneuverings, with the aid of private detectives, to obtain the evidence needed for his divorce; it tells of the divorce court's careful scrutiny of the evidence; and it details Soames' shame and sense of injury at being forced to appear as plaintiff in a divorce proceedings. In short, the book illustrates the Victorian man's dislike of divorce as a

¹¹ In Chancery (1920) and To Let (1921).

¹² Soames Forsyte was the "hero" of The Man of Property, 1906.

remedy for an unsuccessful marriage, and his belief that almost anything is preferable to appearance in a divorce court.

However, in To Let, the action of which occurred in 1920, Soames Forsyte looks at Society's current attitude and grumbles that youth seems to regard marriage as "an incident,"¹³ and that the proprietary view of marriage is dead. Time was, he mused, when man could be secure in the possession of "his soul, his investments, and his women,"¹⁴ but now, "the State had . . . his investments, his woman had herself, and God knew who had his soul."¹⁵ One can expect nothing of women, he thinks, since they have been given the vote and have become "emancipated."¹⁶ Thus, though the marriage "forms and laws" were the same, the spirit in which they were applied and obeyed had changed, and Victorian man had lost his proprietorship of his women as he thought he was losing the ownership of his property.

In A Family Man,¹⁷ a play written in 1921, Galsworthy showed in another way that the emancipation of women was an accomplished fact. John Builder, a choleric, domineering

¹³Galsworthy, To Let, p. 712.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 920.

¹⁵Loc. cit.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 841.

¹⁷ John Galsworthy, Plays: Fifth Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 3-108.

man, has trampled so unnecessarily on the rights of his wife and two daughters that they are driven to revolt. When he attempts to reassert his authority they leave his house, and in his bumbling attempts to force them to return, he loses his chance to become mayor of his city, loses the respect of the community, and most important, he loses the remaining vestiges of his authority over his family. In the defeat of this man, Galsworthy demonstrated in dramatic fashion the passing of the Victorian attitude toward women.

Of all his last-period works, Over the River¹⁸ (1932) illustrates most clearly Galsworthy's belief that the spirit had departed from the divorce laws, leaving only the forms behind. Clare Charwell, daughter of an old aristocratic family, is able to leave her husband, travel alone half way around the world to England, secure a job, maintain her own living quarters, and still be accepted by her family with only a nominal protest. Her family, steeped in the traditions of the conservative aristocracy, even go so far as to take active measures to protect her from her erstwhile husband when he follows her and demands that she return to him. It is true that her husband objects for a time to

¹⁸ John Galsworthy, End of the Chapter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 595-597. End of the Chapter also contains Maid in Waiting, pp. 3-330; and Flowering Wilderness, pp. 333-592.

taking the extreme measure of divorcing her, but his objections spring from the fact that he is a member of one of the few remaining groups, the "service" class,¹⁹ which still objects to divorce. When as a result of having been observed in what appear to be compromising circumstances Clare is made defendant in a divorce suit, her chief fear is for the attendant publicity, should she choose to make a defense. If the suit is not defended, she says, " . . . it will just go through and hardly be noticed," but should she fight against it, there will be a "sensation."²⁰ The questions of her reputation and of her standing in Society she scarcely considers; Clare's thoughts dwell more on the effect of the unpleasant newspaper publicity on her family, and on the financial effects upon her lover. But when at length the public degradation of the trial is over (this unpleasant aspect of the old divorce practices remains), the judge instructs the jury that damages, if any, " . . . must not be what is called 'vindictive,' and they must bear reasonable relation to the co-respondent's means."²¹ Here again is evidence that Galsworthy saw a change

¹⁹ The service class manned the Army, the Navy, the Church, the Indian Service, the Foreign Service, and various other of the English Civil Service departments.

²⁰ Galsworthy, Over the River, p. 745.

²¹ Ibid., p. 855.

in the spirit of the divorce law, when one recalls that in his first period, Galsworthy had several times shown vindictive husbands threatening their wives' lovers with financial ruin in the divorce court.²²

Galsworthy believed, then, that the attitude of Society to divorce was changed, and that the process held no terror for the post-war generation, except insofar as newspaper notoriety was attracted to the more scandalous instances. The Victorian attitude, certainly, was dead or dying, and woman, as Soames remarked, "had herself."

II. POVERTY

Galsworthy's post-war observations on the problem of poverty differed from those of his earlier periods in that they tended toward the advocacy of specific cures. Only the play Windows²³ of 1922, (subtitled A Comedy . . . for Idealists and Others), was similar in tone, manner and conclusion, to The Pigeon of 1912.²⁴ The heroine, if such she may be called, is a girl just released from prison, where

²² Particularly those of The Fugitive and A Bit O' Love.

²³ Galsworthy, Plays: Fifth Series, pp. 3-91.

²⁴ Cf. ante, pp. 21-2.

she has been placed for having smothered her illegitimate child. Taken into the service of a family of idealists for whom her father works, she is subjected to as bewildering a variety of "cures" as were the outcasts of The Pigeon. Her father, who by reason of his position with the family is always on hand to give advice, tells her to work hard and forget; the son of the family wishes to "rescue" her from Society; and his father, a novelist who deals in social problems, wishes to help her as a social experiment. None of them, however, sees her as one who wishes to be treated as a fellow-human rather than as a "problem"; in consequence, she behaves much as did Ferrand and his fellows of The Pigeon. Galsworthy was still, in Windows, advocating the "feeling heart" as a prime requisite in dealing with the poor and the wayward.

In the rest of his post-war works, however, Galsworthy dealt with more specific cures for poverty. The Bickets, poverty-stricken folk of The White Monkey (1924) and of The Silver Spoon (1926),²⁵ who struggle successively against low wages, unemployment, and the even lower wages gained

²⁵ John Galsworthy, A Modern Comedy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929). A Modern Comedy contains The White Monkey, pp. 3-248; The Silver Spoon, pp. 267-504; and Swan Song, pp. 523-798.

from hawking goods in the streets, emigrate, when by a stroke of fortune they come into enough money for their passage, to Australia. Once there, they are but little happier than they have been in London. There is, they write, "too much gilt on the ginger-bread as regards Australia."²⁶ The conclusion to be drawn is that Galsworthy was not convinced that emigration was the solution to the problem of the poor and the unemployed.

On the other hand, the space which Galsworthy devoted to youth emigration as one of the points of Foggartism, that "vast if simple program . . . based on the supposition that human beings could see two inches before their noses,"²⁷ suggests that he considered that device a wise one for England to employ. Foggartism, as introduced by Michael Mont (The Silver Spoon) recognizes that mature town-dwellers like the Bickets, "their physique already impaired by town life,"²⁸ are of little use to the dominions; therefore, it advocates the sending to the colonies of youths of fifteen to eighteen years of age.²⁹ By so doing, the young people will

²⁶ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, p. 366.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 371.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 349.

²⁹ Loc. cit.

not only be saved from "town blight," but will help to build up the population of the dominions, and thus strengthen the British empire. Although this plan is ostensibly the creation of Sir James Foggart (a character in The Silver Spoon), it has about it the heroic quality of Galsworthy's war-time proposals.

In another chapter of the same novel,³⁰ Galsworthy pointed up the need for saving, somehow, the youth of England's poorer classes. Here Michael Mont, (who, by the way, is a crusader in Parliament for social reform), visits the Sunshine House, a place devoted to the amelioration, so far as possible, of the harsh life of the slum children. He discovers that while the Sunshine House does much to help the children, the effect of its work is lost as soon as the children grow old enough to work. They tend then to repeat the life pattern of their parents: to go to work at too early an age, to be "snowed under by the life they go to,"³¹ and to live the rest of their lives in poverty and often unemployment. Michael Mont and the operators of the Sunshine House are realistic enough, however, to recognize that the proposal of youth emigration as a means of saving the youth

³⁰ Chapter VI, Part II, The Silver Spoon, pp. 378-83.

³¹ Ibid., p. 378.

will be opposed by the youth's parents because it will mean the loss to them of the young peoples' wages just as they reach the age when it is possible for them to earn "more than their keep."³² In the view of the "Foggartists," and presumably of Galsworthy himself, the parents' short-sighted desire for immediate gain would outweigh their concern for their children's future.

Through the medium of his novels, Galsworthy advocated yet another means of aiding the poor. Adrian Charwell (Swan Song, 1927), vicar of a church in the slums of London, proposes and acts upon a plan for renovation of the slums, to make them into clean and habitable quarters for the slum-dwellers. Slum houses can be made liveable for "a mere fraction over the old rents,"³³ he says, and without the displacement of their population that occurs in most slum-clearance projects. The ordinary slum-project of the time tears down the slums and replaces them with "barracky flats"³⁴ which the slum populace refuse to live in, even if they can afford the higher rents that are charged. Consequently the whole population of a slum is forced to move elsewhere, and the slum-project defeats its own purpose. Charwell's

³² Ibid., p. 382.

³³ Galsworthy, Swan Song, p. 630.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 628.

plan avoids both difficulties and is, in addition, less expensive. The money for it, incidentally, is to be raised by the formation of private Slum Conversion Societies, which will issue bonds to be repaid in twenty years from the rents of the renovated slums.

That Galsworthy thought the scheme workable is to be inferred from his minute description of the way in which Michael Mont, under Charwell's direction organizes a Slum Society.³⁵ This young member of Parliament, who is in a sense the hero of A Modern Comedy, takes a hand in slum conversion as well as in Foggartism, and, since he is well acquainted in governmental and capitalistic circles, is in a position to form a slum conversion society of great prestige. This he does, without too much difficulty. Therefore, it would seem that even though Galsworthy never wrote of the success of the venture, he was obliquely advocating the formation of just such societies, heavily backed by Society's leaders, as a means of dealing with the slum problem.

With the exception of Windows, which harked back to his rather vague earlier conclusions that nothing would help

³⁵ Chapter VI, "Forming a Committee," pp. 641-52, and Chapter XI, "Converting the Slums," pp. 678-85, Part II, Swan Song.

but to have a "feeling heart," Galsworthy's treatment of the problem of poverty during his last period dealt with specific suggestions as to ways in which the evils of poverty could be remedied.

III. JUSTICE

In the play Windows³⁶ (1922) Galsworthy repeated the charge he had made in his unpublished preface to Justice³⁷ (1909): that "compartmentalisation" of legal proceedings resulted too often in injustice. As the father of Faith Bly, the girl who had smothered her baby, remarks:

At my daughter's trial, I see right into the lawyers, judge and all. There she was, hub of the whole thing, and all they could see of her was 'ow far she affected them personally--one tryin' to get 'er guilty, the other tryin' to get 'er off and the judge summin' 'er up cold-blooded.³⁸

Neither judge nor lawyers, he continues, have tried to visualize her background, or to understand what she has done and how she feels. Each did his own job, mechanically and without imagination, and the result has not been true justice.

³⁶ Galsworthy, Plays: Fifth Series, pp. 3-95.

³⁷ Cf. ante, pp. 28-9.

³⁸ Galsworthy, Windows, p. 41.

The bulk of Galsworthy's last-period criticisms of English justice, however, was aimed less at compartmentalisation, than at what might be called the "extra-legal" sufferings of the participants in any court action. Briefly, Galsworthy disliked the courts' habit of demanding that a defendant exhibit his most intimate and personal affairs in the presence of the public, and worse, of the newspapers. The public desire for scandal appears perhaps more clearly than elsewhere in The Show,³⁹ a play of 1925. Colin Morecombe, a war hero of good family, commits suicide and becomes at once the object of police investigation, since an obvious motive for his suicide is lacking. When the police discover that both Colin and his wife have been having love affairs with other people, the papers publish the news and at once public interest is aroused. Great numbers of people flock to the inquest, motivated by a curiosity so manifest that, after her ordeal in the witness-box, Anne (Colin's wife) feels "skinned"⁴⁰ by their eyes. Holding the inquest publicly serves no purpose except to cause a great deal of unnecessary suffering to Morecombe's

³⁹ John Galsworthy, Plays: Sixth Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 3-97.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 84.

wife, his mother, and to others of the family. It was to this publication of what should have been the affair only of the persons directly concerned that Galsworthy objected.

Other court scenes, with which Galsworthy's novels abound, reiterate the theme. At a society slander trial (The Silver Spoon, 1926), Marjorie Ferrar is tricked by a clever lawyer into seeming immoral, again before a large audience.⁴¹ Millicent Pole, a working girl accused of prostitution, appears in Maid in Waiting (1931) before what Galsworthy terms the "exchange and mart of human indelicacy," and, though acquitted of the charges, leaves court with her reputation so injured that she loses her job.⁴² In a divorce trial described in Over the River,⁴³ the reputation of Clare Corven, daughter of the highly-respected Charwell family, is, despite her innocence, torn to bits before the public.

Though, to judge by the quantity of evidence, Galsworthy disliked the public trial as a means of justice, he gave nowhere an alternative to that custom, nor did he advocate, in so many words, its abolition. He merely

⁴¹ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, pp. 455-66.

⁴² Galsworthy, Maid in Waiting, pp. 33-6.

⁴³ Galsworthy, Over the River, pp. 820-39.

recorded his objections to it by showing in several instances how it worked hardship on those who were forced to make their affairs the object of public scrutiny.

IV. PRISONS

Despite his earlier success in having prison-life modified,⁴⁴ Galsworthy continued to look on prisons as places which injured man's spirit. Faith Bly of Windows⁴⁵ (1922) describes her life in prison in terms reminiscent of those used by Falder in Justice. Prison, she says, is "awfully clean," but so "stone cold" that it "turns your heart."⁴⁶ She relates how she formed the habit (as Falder had) of standing behind her cell door, listening "I don't know how long" for the noises of human activity; of feeling "tight and choky" from the confinement; and of longing for a window through which to "see things living."⁴⁷ Prison life has done nothing to reform her, she says; it has only taken all the "softness" out of her.⁴⁸ Here are Galsworthy's earlier arguments against closed-cell confinement repeated.

⁴⁴ Cf. ante, pp. 31-3.

⁴⁵ Galsworthy, Plays: Fifth Series, pp. 3-91.

⁴⁶ Galsworthy, Windows, p. 47.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

The play Escape⁴⁹ (1926), though its theme is caste feeling, deals in some measure with prison's effect on man's mind, and on the outmoded manner in which prisoners are treated. Matt Dennant, a high-spirited aristocrat imprisoned for the inadvertent killing of a policeman, so objects to being treated "like a dog"⁵⁰ that he elects to try an escape. Following his successful escape, he falls into a conversation with a retired judge. When the judge comments on the reluctance of jurymen to visit a prison and see "where they sent their fellow-beings" Matt Dennant remarks, "Who'd want to visit a prison? I'd as soon visit the Morgue. The bodies there aren't living, anyway!"⁵¹ Again, when the judge says that prisons have been "much improved," Dennant is impelled to remark with considerable irony: "Have they? Splendid! What was the date of that?"⁵² However, though the implication here is that prisons are relatively unchanged, Dennant later admits that the treatment he has received was "all right," though "a trifle monotonous."⁵³ It is true that Galsworthy

⁴⁹ John Galsworthy, Escape: An Episodic Play in a Prologue and Two Parts (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 3-44.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 46.

⁵² Loc. cit.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 80.

carefully indicated that Dennant's remarks sprang from the galling effect of prison on a temperament unused to restraint; nevertheless, there is in the play a tone of dissatisfaction with the prison system. Both Windows and Escape, as criticisms of the prison system, differed from those of Justice only in their degree of feeling. They were, basically, criticisms of the same kind as those of the first period.

V. THE LAND PROBLEM

Galsworthy's war-time belief that England's economic and political salvation lay in the land continued to manifest itself in his post-war writings. It appears as "Foggartism" in The Silver Spoon (1926). The comprehensive Foggartist program, which, excluding the youth emigration feature, is exactly what Galsworthy advocated in the war years,⁵⁴ is based on increased use of the land to make England agriculturally self-sufficient. By taxing imported agricultural products, and by purchasing from English farmers a large supply of wheat each year at a price high enough to give the farmers a good profit, the government of England

⁵⁴ Cf. ante, pp. 68-72.

can build up English agriculture to a point where it can very nearly supply all the country's food.⁵⁵ That done (the process will take about ten years), England will become self-sufficient, will become stronger in a military sense, and thus will no longer be "an abiding temptation to the aggressive feelings of other nations,"⁵⁶ particularly those on the continent. With the coming of airpower, England's overseas food supply is particularly vulnerable, but if she is able to grow her own, that danger will be obviated. If her land is producing, if her surplus youth population is shipped overseas to build up the population of the Empire to a point where the Empire's demand for manufactured goods equals the amount England could supply, and if England is made "safe in the air" by a better air force, the country will be made strong and healthy within, and invulnerable from without. Incidentally, though Galsworthy had originally opposed the use of airplanes in war,⁵⁷ he has by 1926 so far changed his views that he causes Michael Mont to say:

⁵⁵ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, p. 369.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 351.

⁵⁷ Cf. ante, pp. 44-5.

What fools we are not to drop fighting in the air,
 . . . Well, if we don't, I shall go all out for a great
 air force--all hangs, for us, on safety from air
 attack.⁵⁸

Obviously, Galsworthy had given up hope that the nations
 would refrain from using airplanes in war.

To return to the land problem: Galsworthy considered
 the adoption of a sane land policy to be England's only
 hope for salvation. The land, to Galsworthy, was the basis
 not only of her continued prosperity, but almost of her
 national existence; it was the foundation and beginning-
 point of the country's welfare, the point from which other
 social reforms must come.

Michael Mont's experiment with the three "out-of-
 works" was in accordance with Galsworthy's wartime
 suggestion that in addition to large-scale wheat-farming,
 England should have many small produce farmers who would
 raise such things as vegetables, poultry, and pigs for
 immediate sale in near-by cities. Mont finds three poor
 people in the London slums, and gives them some land on
 his ancestral estate, upon which they can grow these types
 of produce. It is, in Mont's words, a "practical experiment
 in Foggertism."⁵⁹ That it fails, after the suicide of one

⁵⁸ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, p. 330.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 313.

of the participants, is not the fault of the plan, he believes, but of "that great obstacle to all salvation--the human element."⁶⁰

Perhaps by way of pointing his moral Galsworthy described in his last novels (Flowering Wilderness, 1931, and Over the River, 1932) the difficulties into which the owners of one large estate have fallen because they have failed to cultivate their land as they should. Condaford Grange, estate of the Charwell family for hundreds of years, is so unproductive that its owners are forced to support it from their private income. As taxes rise and their income diminishes, they are soon faced with the necessity of either selling the place, or making it pay its way. Since the family dislikes to give up Condaford Grange, which will in any case be of little use even as a boy's school or country club ("the only rates before country houses these days"⁶¹), they decide to plow under its grasslands and try to farm it. That the Charwells are unable to farm at a profit, even with the aid of the outside income and considerable produce-farming for quick financial

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 409.

⁶¹ Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness, p. 590.

return,⁶² indicates that they are the victims, according to the ubiquitous Michael Mont, of England's agricultural shortsightedness. The country has turned from production of food at home to importation of it from abroad; from agriculture to industrialism and the carrying trade; unfortunately, however, the profits of industrialism and commerce no longer pay for imports from abroad. As a result, England, is living "beyond her income," and nothing, says Mont, can help her but a "wide and definite reconstruction" of perhaps "twenty years" duration.⁶³ Here again, in his last novel, Galsworthy emphasized that England's well-being was tied to her land, and that until the land was better utilized, England would continue to have hard times.

VI. PARLIAMENT

Galsworthy continued to believe, as he had in the years before the war,⁶⁴ that Parliament was a stumbling-block to social progress. Again through the medium of Michael Mont (The Silver Spoon, 1926) he illustrated Parliament's unwillingness to abandon party politics and

⁶² Galsworthy, Over the River, pp. 599-600.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 601.

⁶⁴ Cf. ante, pp. 46-7.

time-wasting debate in favor of action on a comprehensive program of legislation on such matters of immediate and lasting importance, as agriculture, unemployment, and the slums. Mont, for instance, after listening to many fine speeches in the House of Commons, each of which makes him think that "somebody must certainly be converted to something," discovers to his dismay that "nobody ever was."⁶⁵ Opinions, he learns, are formed "elsewhere," and no amount of talking in the House can change them; therefore, most of the speechmaking is time wasted. Again, when he introduces his own program of Foggartism into Parliament, he is met with polite but ironical laughter from a body whose efforts in the main, are directed toward keeping the status quo in England. In a word, the House is committed to those very principles which Mont, and Galsworthy, his creator, hold to be the cause of England's ruin: industrialism, free trade, and disregard of the land.⁶⁶ According to a "practical politician," the reason why Foggartism or any other social program moves so slowly through Parliament is that "People only react to immediate benefit, or . . . to

⁶⁵ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, p. 293.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 348.

imminent danger." Social legislation, since it is usually of no obvious immediate benefit, and since the conditions that inspire the legislation are of no immediate danger, is usually neglected. Such legislation as Parliament does manage to pass is never thorough enough to be effective. Parliament makes "piecemeal" changes and then only when forced to do so by "sheer practical necessity." The only chance for a comprehensive program of legislation occurs when, under cover of "great journalistic outcry" for change, "sweeping measures" can be rushed into law while public and Parliament are so alarmed that they will "swallow" them "before they know what they're in for."⁶⁷ Under ordinary conditions, however, when the people are thinking of their own rather than of national affairs, Parliament, free from public pressure, allows partisan politics to delay any comprehensive social program. It is a place "where they still talked with calm disagreement, as if England were the England of 1906"⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 406.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 502.

VII. EDUCATION AND THE PRESS

Galsworthy's desire for "a new educational charter-- a charter of taste, affirming the rule of dignity, beauty, and simplicity . . . " ⁶⁹ continued relatively unchanged from his earlier periods. He saw in education, however, more than a means of combatting class feeling. It became to him a way to insure the proper functioning of the democracy that England had become. To be "real" and "effective," democracy must consistently put into its administrative positions the "most trustworthy" of its citizens, the "best in spirit." Unless, however, something were done by education to develop the voters' "intelligence and honesty, public spirit and independence," ⁷⁰ the best people would not be elected.

The education of the public was to be accomplished in the same manner as the improvement of democracy--by putting the "best heads of education" in charge of the schools, and letting them revise the educational system in such a way as to raise the standards of "general taste, conduct, and

⁶⁹ John Galsworthy, "To the League of Political Education," Addresses in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 70.

⁷⁰ Galsworthy, "Talking at Large," Addresses in America, p. 85.

learning."⁷¹ "Democracy has come," concluded Galsworthy, "and on education Democracy hangs; the thread as yet is slender."⁷²

One of the important jobs of education was to introduce "the humanistic religion of service for the common weal," a religion which put the "health and happiness of all" before the "wealth of self."⁷³ In partial illustration of his ideal of service, Galsworthy devoted his last trilogy, End of the Chapter, to a description of people who manned the "service" class, which devoted itself pretty closely to that ideal. The Charwell family traditionally gives its efforts to the service, Hilary Charwell being in the Church, Hubert and Sir Conway in the Army, Lionel in the law, and Adrian a curator of a national museum. Though the family is always short of money ("We're the poorest family in England, I do believe"⁷⁴) it does its jobs with determination and enjoyment, and for the benefit of Society rather than of itself. Galsworthy seemed to be holding these people up as examples of what he meant when he demanded "service for the common weal."

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 92.

⁷² Ibid., p. 93.

⁷³ John Galsworthy, "Where We Stand," Castles in Spain and Other Screeds (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), p. 37.

⁷⁴ Galsworthy, Maid in Waiting, p. 225.

Newspapers, which Galsworthy held to be an educational force, "though you might not always think so,"⁷⁵ must be made to tell the truth. To a great extent, he said, the modern world relies for its opinions, on "public utterances and the press." If the press were left in the hands of those who were using it for "Party and personal ends," it would continue to "plunge us into endless cruelties and follies."⁷⁶ It was, therefore, wise to insure that the press spoke the truth, and that it be used as an agency to "raise the level of honesty, intelligence, public spirit, and taste in the average voter"⁷⁷ But first, said Galsworthy, newspapers, as well as education, must be rescued "from the grip of vested interests."⁷⁸ How that was to be done he did not say, except that the nation must, somehow, "man these agencies [education and the press] with men and women of real honesty and vision" and must give them "real power to effect in the rising generation the evolution of ethics and taste"⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Galsworthy, "To the League of Political Education," Addresses in America, p. 71.

⁷⁶ Galsworthy, "Talking at Large," Addresses in America, p. 86.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 88.

⁷⁸ Galsworthy, "To the League of Political Education," Addresses in America, p. 71.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 72.

VIII. BIG BUSINESS

Though Galsworthy did not often speak of big business, he was conscious, in the post-war period, of its strong influence in directions he did not like. The Forest,⁸⁰ a play written in 1922, had this influence as its thesis. Adrian Bastaple, the owner of great mines in South Africa, wishes to create a disturbance over foreign slave-trading in Africa, so that under cover of the disturbance he can import Chinese coolies to work in his mines. His object is to divert attention from his own use of what is virtually slave labor; therefore, he backs an expedition to Central Africa, whose purpose is to uncover evidence of another country's slave trade. The expedition meets with disaster at the hands of savage tribes, and only a man or two escape to return to civilization. Bastaple, hearing privately of the disaster to the expedition, and desiring because of war rumors to rid himself of his interest in the African mines, spreads about London a rumor that the expedition has found diamonds. On the strength of the rumor his mine stock, hitherto low in price, rises sharply and he is able to sell it and escape with his fortune intact. Galsworthy likened him, because of his predatory dealings, to a big jungle cat,

⁸⁰ Galsworthy, Plays: Sixth Series, pp. 3-115.

and London to a jungle in which beasts of prey like Bastaple were allowed to prowl unchecked. Galsworthy was aiming, of course, at the greed of big business, and at its disregard of human rights and welfare.

Of a type similar to Bastaple was Sir Thomas Lockit, who appeared briefly in The Silver Spoon (1926). A great manufacturer, Lockit wants "to break Labour and make it work like a nigger from sheer necessity," he wants longer working hours, lower wages, and a great increase in the export of goods, at lower prices, to retain the European markets. His reactionary views lead Blythe, the editor of a magazine devoted to social progress, to exclaim:

. . . the really dangerous people are not the politicians, who want things with public passion--that is mildly, slowly; but the big business men, who want things with private passion, strenuously, quickly. They know their own minds; and if we don't look out they'll wreck the country.⁸¹

If such men persist, and if labor continues to grow in strength and aggressiveness ("Some of the Labour people . . . are just as bad--they want to break everybody."), England will soon, he prophesies, "be having civil war."⁸²

⁸¹ Galsworthy, The Silver Spoon, p. 433.

⁸² Loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, evidence has been presented to show what were Galsworthy's criticisms of English customs, laws, and life, and at what time these criticisms appeared. Before the conclusions are drawn, a brief review of the criticisms may be of use.

One of Galsworthy's chief preoccupations in his earlier years was the position of women. He disliked the way Victorian husbands and their society thought of women as property. He wished for the divorce laws to be liberalized. He wanted women to have the vote. When women, as a result of the war, were given more freedom and the vote, Galsworthy noted these facts, but continued, even though divorce was no longer considered disgraceful, to work for a liberalization of the divorce laws.

Poverty and its cures formed another major part of Galsworthy's criticisms. He spent most of his first period pointing out the evils of poverty and the inadequacy of Society's cures for it (as in The Island Pharisees of 1904 and Fraternity of 1909). During and after the war, Galsworthy concentrated on the presentation of his own cures for poverty, including slum-renovation, child emigration, and return to the land. He seems to have recognized

that more than sympathy, "social conscience," or a "feeling heart" was necessary to cure such a deep-rooted problem.

Galsworthy said of English justice that it was partial to the wealthy and that it was so "compartmentalised" that it often failed to render verdicts in keeping with the circumstances of the crime it judged. In his last years, he was more concerned with the embarrassment caused by public trials.

English prisons he criticized as places that destroyed men's minds and spirits by forcing them to live in silence and in solitude. When, partially as the result of his play Justice (1909) and of his letters to prison officials, prison conditions were changed for the better, Galsworthy virtually abandoned the theme. He used it only two or three times and then as a sub-theme, in his war and post-war periods.

Galsworthy's criticisms of the Church of England were that it insisted on exercising its ancient authority after that authority had in fact disappeared, that it preferred blind faith to reason, and that as a supporter of the established order in England it was an enemy to social progress. Early in the war, Galsworthy prophesied the death of "dogmatic Christianity," and in 1919 (Saint's Progress) showed the Church losing the last remnants of its influence over the people. Following the war, Galsworthy dropped his

criticisms of the Church, except for his description of Hilary Charwell (A Modern Comedy and End of the Chapter), of whom he approved as a social reformer. The Church problem, like that of women's rights, was to Galsworthy a dead issue.

His early belief that Society's narrow code of sexual morality was a cause of suffering, and that it was applied less sternly to the rich than to the poor, all but disappeared in his later writings. The probable reason for its disappearance was that, with the relaxation of moral standards during and after the war, the problem ceased to exist.

As early as 1909 Galsworthy had stated his chief objections to war: it was costly in lives and money, it meant the end for a time of social progress, and it meant the rising of a blind, violent nationalism masquerading as patriotism. After World War I had started, Galsworthy perceived that the war-born national unity of England could, if properly directed, be used in the solution of the various social problems with which the country was afflicted. Therefore, although he frequently used his former themes, he concentrated on the necessity for planning and executing a national social and economic reform.

Galsworthy's exposition of the land problem began with The Freelanders (1915), in which he spoke chiefly of the tyranny of landlords, and evolved, in the 1917 and 1918

essays on "The Land," into a complete and integrated cure for England's economic ills. The land was not only to make England militarily independent, but also it was to cure in a large measure the "town blight" of her city population by continually providing new and strong human breeding-stock. After the war, in "Foggartism," the land was even more closely tied to the problems of military self-sufficiency, improvement of city populations, and the strengthening of England's bonds with her Dominions.

Galsworthy noted early in 1914 that one of the prime obstacles to any social advance was Parliament. This body wasted its time in fruitless arguments and partisan politics, when it should have been working on sorely needed social legislation. After the war's end, Galsworthy made the same criticisms, adding that such legislation as Parliament did choose to pass was of a "piecemeal" nature.

Galsworthy's education program, like his land program, grew in importance. At first (1912), education was to him only a destroyer of caste feeling; after the war, education became one of the means by which England could be made socially, and politically healthy.

His criticisms of big business occupied no very important position in his works, but they indicate that he was conscious of the callous way in which big businessmen tampered with the lives of their economic inferiors. Too,

he seems to have thought them to be obstacles to social progress. Certainly Lockit (The Silver Spoon, 1926), with his demands for lower wages and longer hours, was a menace to the welfare of the working classes.

Galsworthy shifted perceptibly from objective criticism to advocacy of panaceas, from art to artful propaganda.¹ His earlier works were largely devoted to pointing out social evils, but not to mentioning cures more specific than the "feeling heart." Later, particularly in A Modern Comedy, he advocated specific cures for "town blight," for the land problem, and for slum housing. He seems to have become impatient with his role of critic, and to have gone down into the arena himself.

Galsworthy was a dextrous juggler of many themes. The play Justice (1909), deals with two major themes, the blindness of justice and the cruelty of prisons, and the minor theme of Society's sexual morality. The Island Pharisees (1904) deals with divorce, women's rights, poverty, and the church. The Silver Box (1906) deals with justice, poverty, and sexual morality, and The Silver Spoon (1926) deals with the land, poverty, unemployment, slum renovation,

¹ The two studies which have been made of this problem come to opposing conclusions. V. E. Simrell, in "John Galsworthy: The Artist as Propagandist" [Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIII (June, 1927), 225-36], concludes that Galsworthy was primarily an artist, while Dorothy Martin, in "Mr. Galsworthy as Artist and Reformer" [Yale Review, XIV (October, 1924), 126-39], believes him to be a propagandist. Neither writer, as the dates of their studies indicate, considered all of Galsworthy's writings.

and child emigration. Galsworthy seldom, it seems, aimed at one problem without managing to touch on a couple of others.

In his criticisms, Galsworthy was generally abreast of the times. His criticisms of women's rights and of poverty began about 1900, when those questions were arousing great public controversy; his criticisms of war when in 1909 the war-clouds were growing quite plain to the discerning eye; and his criticisms of the state of England's agriculture when, because of war-time needs, agriculture had become an important problem. In at least one instance, however, he looked back rather wistfully to the past. In his final novel, Over the River (1932), he seems, by his careful description of the Charwells, to be implying that the country would do well to have more Charwells, more landed gentry, more people of "family." Galsworthy did not wholly approve of the new, raw, democratic England in which he found himself after the war.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Adcock, Arthur St. John, "John Galsworthy," Gods of Modern Grub Street: Impressions of Contemporary Authors. London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., [1924]. Pp. 113-20.
- Alden, Percy, Democratic England. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912. 271 pp.
- Chevillon, Andre, "John Galsworthy," Three Studies in English Literature: Kipling, Galsworthy, Shakespeare. From the French by Florence Simmonds; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1923. Pp. 153-219.
- Dibelius, Wilhelm, England. Translated from the German by Mary Agnes Hamilton, M.P., with an introduction by A. D. Lindsay; New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, [n.d.]. 569 pp.
- Galsworthy, John, Addresses in America: 1919. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919. 109 pp.
- , Another Sheaf. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919. 336 pp.
- , The Burning Spear: Being the Experiences of Mr. John Lavender in Time of War. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. 251 pp.
- , Captures. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. 305 pp.
- , Caravan: The Assembled Tales of John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925. 760 pp.
- , Castles in Spain and Other Screeeds. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927. 263 pp.
- , A Commentary. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [1908]. 263 pp.
- , The Country House. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907. 307 pp.

- Galsworthy, John, End of the Chapter: Maid in Waiting, Flowering Wilderness, Over the River. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934. 897 pp.
- , Escape: An Episodic Play in a Prologue and Two Parts. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928. 94 pp.
- , Five Tales. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1919. 380 pp.
- , The Forsyte Saga: The Man of Property, In Chancery, To Let. With a preface by Ada Galsworthy; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943. 921 pp.
- , The Freeland. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915. 412 pp.
- , The Inn of Tranquillity: Studies and Essays. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912. 276 pp.
- , The Island Pharisees. Revised edition; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919. 317 pp.
- , A Modern Comedy: The White Monkey, The Silver Spoon, Swan Song. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929. 796 pp.
- , A Motley. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910. 274 pp.
- , On Forsyte 'Change. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1930. 285 pp.
- , Plays. First Series: The Silver Box, Joy, Strife. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930. 263 pp.
- , Plays. Second Series: The Eldest Son, The Little Dream, Justice. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. 217 pp.
- , Plays. Third Series: The Fugitive, The Pigeon, The Mob. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914. 250 pp.
- , Plays. Fourth Series: A Bit O' Love, The Foundations, The Skin Game. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. 269 pp.

- Galsworthy, John, Plays. Fifth Series: A Family Man, Loyalties, Windows. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. 309 pp.
- , Plays. Sixth Series: The Forest, Old English, The Show. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. 224 pp.
- , A Sheaf. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916. 393 pp.
- , Tatterdemalion. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1920. 305 pp.
- , Three Novels of Love: The Dark Flower, Beyond, Saint's Progress. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933. 739 pp.
- , Villa Rubein and Other Stories. Vol. IV, 448 pp., The Novels, Tales, and Plays of John Galsworthy, Devon Edition, 12 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.
- , Worshipful Society: The Country House, Fraternity, The Patrician. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932. 743 pp.
- Hulme, Edward Maslin, A History of the British People. New York and London: The Century Co., 1924. 717 pp.
- Marrot, Harold V., The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. 819 pp.
- Muir, Ramsay, A Short History of the British Commonwealth. 2 vols., New York: World Book Company, 1923. 614 pp.
- Smith, Donald E., editor, The New Larned History for Ready Reference Reading and Research. Vol. IV, 903 pp. Based on the work of the late J. N. Larned, A.M., 12 vols.; Springfield, Massachusetts: C. A. Nichols Publishing Company, 1924.
- Trevelyan, George Macauley, History of England. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926. 723 pp.

B. PERIODICALS

Martin, Dorothy, "Mr. Galsworthy as Artist and Reformer,"
Yale Review, XIV (October, 1924), 126-39.

Simrell, V. E., "John Galsworthy: The Artist as Propagandist,"
Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIII (June, 1927), 225-36.